

In the Spotlight

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Wexler to Present 2016 Chu Lecture

Dr. Ruth Wexler, executive director of Research and Development at Bristol-Meyers Squibb, will present the 2016 Chu Lecture at the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy. The event, which will be held on March 30 at 11 a.m. in Room 201, Pharmacy South, is free and open to the public; it is hosted by the College's Department of Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Sciences.

Wexler received her B. A. degree in Chemistry with honors, with a minor in biology from Boston University in 1977, and her Ph.D. degree in Organic Chemistry from the University of Pennsylvania in 1982 under the direction of Professor Amos B. Smith, III. Wexler started her career at the DuPont Company, as a Research Chemist in the Medicinal Chemistry Section of the Biomedical Products Division. While at the DuPont Experimental Station she was promoted to positions of increasing leadership responsibility and in 1998 was promoted to Executive Director. In 2001, she joined the Bristol-Myers Squibb Company as Executive Director, Discovery Chemistry, (post-acquisition of DuPont Pharmaceuticals Company) and in the fall of 2002, she moved to Hopewell site in New Jersey where she currently heads the medicinal chemistry efforts directed at Cardiovascular Diseases.



She has been active in both the Medicinal Chemistry Division and Organic Chemistry Division of the American Chemical Society where she served the Medicinal Chemistry Division as a member of Long Range Planning Committee (1996-1999), as a member of the Predoctoral Fellowship program Committee (1998-2001), and as an Industrial Councilor (2003-2005). In addition, she served the Organic Division as a member of the Executive Committee (1997-2000). Her professional activities include serving on NIH Medicinal Chemistry A Study Section (1999-2003). She was honored in 2004 as one of 12 Outstanding New Jersey Women in Research by the New Jersey Association for Biomedical Research. In 2011, she was a recipient of the Bristol-Myers Squibb Ondetti and Cushman award for her leadership role in the discovery of Eliquis®. She has been selected as the recipient of the 2015 E.B. Hershberg Award for Important Discoveries in Medicinally Active Substances. Wexler has co-authored more than 190 peer-reviewed scientific publications and patents and has contributed several review articles and book chapters largely in the area of cardiovascular research.

The Chu Lectureship was established to bring internationally recognized leaders in drug discovery to the University and to honor the outstanding accomplishments and contributions of Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus David C.K. Chu in the College's Department of Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Sciences.

Chu received his Bachelor's in Pharmacy from Seoul National University in 1964. After graduation, he served as a Korean Naval Officer, and later moved to the United States, where he earned a Master's in Medicinal Chemistry from Idaho State University in 1970, and his Ph.D. in Medicinal Chemistry from State University of New York at Buffalo in 1974. He was involved in drug discovery at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Institute of Cancer Research as a Research Associate for six years, and then joined UGA's College of Pharmacy in 1982.

As a medicinal chemist, Chu has been involved in drug discovery of anticancer and antiviral agents for more than 30 years. He has published more than 300 peer-reviewed research articles in major scientific journals, edited four books, and has more than 50 U.S. patents. During his academic career, he has discovered several clinical candidates for cancer and viral diseases.

Chu has trained more than 120 graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, and has maintained an active research program in drug design and synthesis, even after his retirement in 2008. His research program in drug discovery has been recognized as one of the top academic laboratories both nationally and internationally.

Former Chu Lectureship Speakers

2012 Jack Secrist, President, Chief Executive Officer, Southern Research Institute

Topic: "Nucleosides: A Fertile Field for Drug Discovery"

2013 Robert Vince, Director, Center for Drug Design Academic Health Center, Department of Medicinal Chemistry, College of Pharmacy, University of Minnesota

Topic: "Acyclonucleosides to Ziagen– A Journey"

2014 Dennis Liotta, Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor of Chemistry & Director, The Emory Institute of Drug Development Emory University

Topic: "Nucleoside Analogs as RNA-Dependent RNA Polymerase Inhibitors of Single Stranded RNA Viruses"

2015 Mark Sliwkowski, Distinguished Staff Scientist, Molecular Oncology, Genetech

Topic: "Successes and challenges in targeting activated HER2 in solid tumors"