

Meet a New ASP Member

by Dr. Diane S. Swaffar

ASP welcomes many new members to the Society this year. We are now especially delighted and honored to actually welcome back a former member of the ASP, Dr. Harry Rosenberg. In addition to holding the position of University President, he is also Professor of Pharmaceutical Science and is the Founder of the University of Southern Nevada (USN). He also recently founded a new branch campus of USN in South Jordan, Utah. In addition to his top administrative role, he teaches biochemistry in the Doctor of Pharmacy Program. We are grateful to him for giving us the opportunity to get reacquainted with him after 25 years.

Why did you join ASP after not being a member for 25 years?

After all of my discussions with you and seeing your enthusiasm for the society, I must say that you have really piqued my interest in pharmacognosy again. I would really like to be up-to-date on what is going on in the world of pharmacognosy. Since I left the society in the early 1980s, I am sure that I have a lot of catching up to do.

Why did you leave the society then?

At that time, my research interests changed. I got involved in research on the secondary complications of diabetes.

What are/were your research interests in pharmacognosy?

When I was active in that area, I did what I call “aberrant synthesis”. Working with alkaloid biosynthesis primarily in cactus species, I would modify substrates with new functional groups and then determine enzyme specificity.

I know that you have had a very distinguished career as a researcher, academician, and administrator. Can you tell us how it all began?

Well, I obtained a B.S. in Biology from the University of Toronto. I received a B.S. in Pharmacy, Pharm.D., M.S., and Ph.D. in Biochemistry/Natural products from the University of Michigan. I began my academic career at the University of Nebraska, rising to the ranks of Professor. I then accepted a position as Pharmaceutical Sciences Department Chair at Campbell University after which I moved on to become the Dean at North Dakota State University College of Pharmacy. I then became the Founding Dean of the College of Pharmacy at Western University in Pomona, California, where I started an innovative block system of learning. As you know, I established the Nevada College of Pharmacy, now USN, and the rest is history!

What would you like to achieve through your membership?

As indicated earlier, I would like to know what is going on in the world of pharmacognosy and what kinds of research people are doing in that area. With my busy schedule, if time permits, I would like to become involved again in collaborations with our potential natural products researchers as we expand our research program.



Dr. Harry Rosenberg in the classroom.

Then with you as a new member, do you think that there would be a greater emphasis on pharmacognosy on both campuses?

Yes, I would anticipate that to be the case.

What do you like doing in your spare time?

When I have spare time, I really enjoy “wood turning”. I have turned wood into many mortars and pestles over the years. Although I am not that good at it, I also enjoy playing golf when I have the time.