Michael J. Sofia, Ph.D. is Awarded the 2016 IUPAC-Richter Prize

The 2016 IUPAC-Richter Prize in Medicinal Chemistry has been awarded to Dr. Michael J. Sofia. Dr. Sofia received this award in recognition of his outstanding creative contributions to the invention, discovery, and development of the novel antiviral drug sofosbuvir (Sovaldi™) as a treatment for the cure of hepatitis C virus infection. It was approved in 2013. This new drug and its combinations provide high cure rates in infected people.

The IUPAC-Richter Prize, comprising a plaque and a check for USD 10,000, will be presented at the XXIV European Federation of Medicinal Chemistry International Symposium in Manchester, UK (28 August - 1 September 2016). The plaque will be signed by Professor Natalia Tarasova, President of IUPAC, Erik Bogsch, Chief Executive Officer of Gedeon Richter plc (Budapest, Hungary), and János Fischer, Chair of the IUPAC-Richter Prize selection committee. Dr. Michael J. Sofia will present a lecture at this Symposium and also at the American Chemical Society's 34th National Medicinal Chemistry Symposium in Chicago, IL (26-29 June 2016).

Dr. Sofia studied chemistry at the Cornell University and received his Ph.D. in organic chemistry from the University of Illinois, working with Professor John Katzenellenbogen. He was an NIH postdoctoral fellow in synthetic organic chemistry at Columbia University with Professor Gilbert Stork. He started his career in pharmaceutical research at E.R. Squibb & Co., continued his research work at Eli Lilly & Co., Intercardia, and Bristol-Myers Squibb, and was Sr. Vice President of Chemistry at Pharmasset until Pharmasset's acquisition by Gilead in 2012. He pioneered the development of nucleoside and nucleotide prodrugs for the treatment of the hepatitis C virus. Michael J. Sofia is currently Chief Scientific Officer at Arbutus Biopharma and holds a professorship at the Baruch S. Blumberg Institute for Hepatitis Research.

Previous IUPAC-Richter Prizes were awarded to Malcolm F.G. Stevens in 2006, Jan Heeres in 2008, Arun K. Ghosh in 2010, Stephen Hanessian in 2012, and Helmut Buschmann in 2014.

Gedeon Richter Plc. (www.richter.hu), headquartered in Budapest/Hungary, is a major pharmaceutical company in Central Eastern Europe, with an expanding direct presence in Western Europe. Richter's consolidated sales were approximately EUR 1.2 billion (US$ 1.3 billion) in 2015, while its market capitalization amounted to EUR 3.3 billion (US$ 3.6 billion) at the end of December 2015. The product portfolio of Richter covers almost all important therapeutic areas, including gynaecology, central nervous system, and cardiovascular areas. Having the largest R&D unit in Central Eastern Europe, Richter's original research activity focuses on CNS disorders. With its widely acknowledged steroid chemistry expertise, Richter is a significant player in the female healthcare field worldwide. Richter is also active in biosimilar product development.

Green Chemistry for Life Grants Awarded

On 14 December 2015, UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) awarded leading chemistry researchers from around the world with grants to support research in the field of green chemistry under a joint PhosAgro/UNESCO/IUPAC Green Chemistry for Life Grant Programme. The event took place during the 4th UN Secretary-General's Scientific Advisory Board Meeting and the Congress of UNESCO Chairs in Saint Petersburg.

The grant award ceremony was attended by UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova, Secretary-General of the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO Grigory Ordzhonikidze, President of the Russian Academy of Sciences Vladimir Frolov, St. Petersburg Governor Georgy Poltavchenko, Rector of the St. Petersburg National Mineral Resources University Vladimir Litvinenko, President of IUPAC and Director of the Institute for Chemistry and Sustainable Development of the D. Mendeleev University of Chemical Technology of Russia Natalya Tarasova, Member of the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO Andrey Guryev, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences Flavia Schlegel, and IUPAC Treasurer Professor John Corish of the Trinity College Dublin School of Chemistry.

The Green Chemistry for Life programme was launched on 29 March 2013 at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France. The goal of the partnership was to support talented young scientists engaged in green chemistry projects aimed at protecting the environment, creating energy-efficient processes, and