A Perspective on Professor Scott Eric Denmark: The Man, The Myth, The Chemist









## Russell C. Smith Stoltz/Reisman Group Meeting



January 24, 2011



## From Humble Beginnings...

- Born in Lynbrook, New York on 17 June 1953
- Obtained an S. B. degree from M.I.T. in 1975
  - Conducted research with both Richard H. Holm (ferredoxin analogs) and Daniel S. Kemp (functionalized cyclophanes).
- Received D. Sc. Tech degree in 1980
  - Prof. Dr. Albert Eschenmoser ("On the Stereochemistry of the S N' Reaction").
- 1980– Independent career as assistant professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- 1986 Associate Professor
- 1987 Full Professor
- 1991–Reynold C. Fuson Professor of Chemistry.



## To A Thriving Career In Organic Chemistry: Outline

Silicon-Directed Nazarov Cyclization



Inter/Intramolecular [4+2]/[3+2] Cycloaddition of Nitro Olefins



 Lewis-Base Activation of Lewis Acids – Enantioselective Carbon-Carbon Bond Formation



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## Nazarov Cyclization – Background

• Named after the Russian chemist I. N. Nazarov (1900-1957)



Proved later that the cyclization proceeds through a divinyl ketone



Incorporation of nucleophile gave further insight into mechanism



Org. React. 1994, 45, 1-158

#### Nazarov Cyclization – Mechanism



Promoted by thermal or photochemical initiation



Org. React. 1994, 45, 1-158

#### Nazarov Cyclization – Mechanism



Remote substituents can cause changes in the *torquoselectivity* of the cyclization



Org. React. 1994, 45, 1-158

#### Silicon-Directed Nazarov Cyclization



J. Am. Chem. Soc. 1982, 104, 6242.

## SDNC – Effect of Allylic Position

 Larger substituents promote increased levels of torquoselectivity (presence of vinyl silane)



Tetrahedron 1986, 48, 2821

### SDNC – Effect of Silicon Functionality



R	(C,T)	(C,C)	yield, %
Me	78	22	99
Me <sub>2</sub> PhSi	84	16	63
MePh <sub>2</sub> Si	86	14	83
Ph <sub>3</sub> Si	87	13	15
<i>I</i> -Pr₃Si	90	10	70

## Formation of Enantioenriched Carbocycles Via SDNC





J. Org. Chem. 1990, 55, 5544



Presence of silicon functionality directs formation of cyclopentenone

Tetrahedron 1997, 53, 2103

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Intramolecular Cycloaddition of Nitrosoalkenes

Reactivity of Nitrosoalkenes



– Intermediate nitrosoalkene can act as  $2\pi$  or  $4\pi$  cycloaddition component



J. Org. Chem. 1984, 49, 4714

## Nitroolefins as $4\pi$ Components in Cycloadditions



•

> 98/2 trans/cis

Nitro groups serve as useful functionality for further elaboration



Helv. Chim. Acta. 1986, 69, 1971

J. Am. Chem. Soc. 1986, 108, 1306

#### Intramolecular [3+2] Cycloaddition



J. Am. Chem. Soc. 1990, 112, 311

## Tandem Double Intramolecular [4+2]/[3+2] Cycloaddition

• Fused/bridged C(6)



• Fused/bridged C(5)



Cycloaddition can be rendered diastereoselective by presence of chiral auxiliary

Org. Lett. 2001, 3, 2907





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#### Lewis-Base Activation of Lewis Acids



Preparative Examples



REVIEW: Angew. Chem Int. Ed. 2008,47, 1560

## Lewis-Base Activation of Lewis Acids – Principles



REVIEW: Angew. Chem Int. Ed. 2008,47, 1560

#### Lewis-Base Activation of Lewis Acids – Principles



#### Aldol Reaction of Silicon-Substituted Enolates

Uncatalyzed



2. sat. aq. NaHCO<sub>3</sub>

 $\mathbf{R} = \mathbf{P}\mathbf{h}$ 

(E)-cinammyl

Ph, anti/syn 65/1, 93% ee *(E)*-cinnamyl, anti/syn >99/1, 88% ee

J. Am. Chem. Soc. 1996, 118, 7404

#### Addition to Ketones – Silyl Ketene Acetals



J. Am. Chem. Soc. 2002, 124, 4234

#### Vinylogous Aldol



## Formation of Quaternary Centers – Silyl Ketene Imines



N-Silyl Oxyketene Imines – Aldol Surrogates







### Total Synthesis of RK-397



Synthesis of Polyene Fragment



8 of 10 stereocenters were generated by substrate control

## Awards/Recognition

- Eli Lilly Research Grantee, 1983
- Beckman Endowment Research Award, 1983
- University of Illinois Center for Advanced Study, Beckman Fellow, Spring 1985
- A. P. Sloan Foundation Fellow, 1985-1987
- NSF Presidential Young Investigator Award, 1985-1990
- Procter and Gamble University Exploratory Research Program Award, 1986-89
- University Scholar, University of Illinois, 1986-1989
- School of Chemical Sciences Teaching Award, University of Illinois, 1986
- Stuart Pharmaceuticals Award in Chemistry, ICI Americas, 1987
- A. C. Cope Scholar Award, American Chemical Society, 1989

- Fellow, American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1990
- Reynold C. Fuson Professor of Chemistry, 1991
- Pedler Medal (Royal Society of Chemistry), 2002-2003
- ACS Award for Creative Work in Synthetic Organic Chemistry, 2003
- Yamada-Koga Prize (Japan Research Foundation for Optically Active Compounds), 2006
- Fellow, Royal Society of Chemistry (FRSC), 2006
- Prelog Medal (ETH-Zürich, Switzerland), 2007
- Robert Robinson Medal and Lectureship (Royal Society of Chemistry), 2009-2010
- H. C. Brown Award for Creative Research in Synthetic Methods (ACS), 2009
- Fellow, American Chemical Society, 2009 (inaugural year)

