Preface

This issue of *Skin Pharmacology and Applied Skin Physiology* is to honor and recognize the 60th birthday of David R. Bickers. Currently he is Nelson Truman Professor and Chairman of the Department of Dermatology at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York. This acknowledgment to Dr. Bickers is our thoughtful consideration in view of his many contributions to the discipline of skin pharmacology. Dr. Bickers is a scientist who has had over 200 original papers, many book chapters and two seminal books published. Possibly the most important contribution of Bickers to the discipline of skin pharmacology is his original research paper entitled 'Human Skin Aryl Hydrocarbon Hydroxylase' published in 1977 in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*. In the paper, it was confirmed that the human skin is a metabolically active organ where topically applied chemicals could get metabolized to their active form. In this case, benzo(a)pyrene present in crude coal tar topically applied to human skin was shown to induce aryl hydrocarbon hydroxylase. This observation of Dr. Bickers revolutionized the field of environmental carcinogenesis which is an area of research he is still engaged in even today. Dr. Bickers also had a long-standing interest in

diseases associated with cutaneous photosensitivity, particularly the porphyrias. In 1977, he was the first who discovered that the skin has the full capacity to synthesize porphyrins. This observation has recently become most important when topically applied δ -aminolevulinic acid proved useful in photodynamic therapy.

This journal formerly known as *Skin Pharmacology* owes its foundation to Dr. Bickers. In a meeting held in Paris in 1988, he convinced Prof. Malcom Greaves and Prof. Hans Schaefer to create the discipline of skin pharmacology which finally led to the founding of this journal by Prof. Schaefer.

In this special issue of *Skin Pharmacology and Applied Skin Physiology*, several close friends of Dr. Bickers contribute articles and each of these is a tribute to Dr. Bickers to whom we wish continuing success.

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