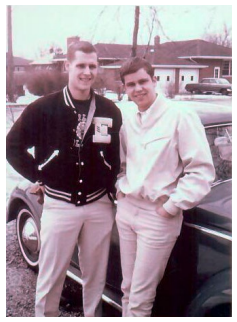
Table of Contents

Preface 11

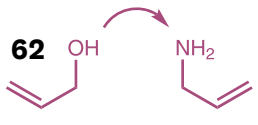
1 Childhood and Education 15

1.1 Family and schooling **17**
1.2 Undergraduate studies **24**
1.3 Graduate studies **27**
1.4 Postdoctoral studies **33**



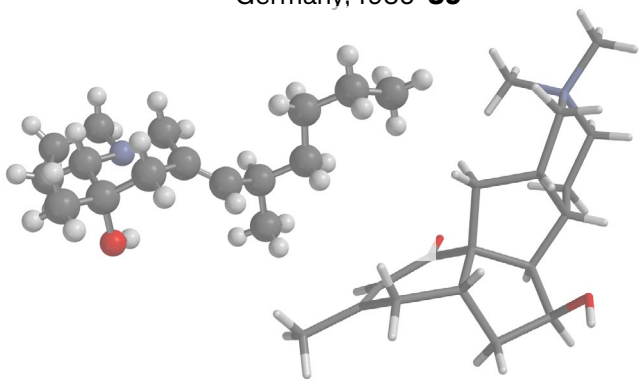
2 The 1970s: Early Discoveries 39

2.1 Initiating my research career and the discovery of the Overman rearrangement **41**
2.2 Thermal rearrangements **48**
2.3 Diels-Alder reactions and the total synthesis of pumiliotoxin C **50**
2.4 Total synthesis of gephyrotoxin and the invention of the aza-Cope Mannich reaction **54**
2.5 Catalytic allylic rearrangements **57**
2.6 Teaching, mentoring, and life at UC Irvine in the 1970s **58**
2.7 Early participation in scientific conferences **62**



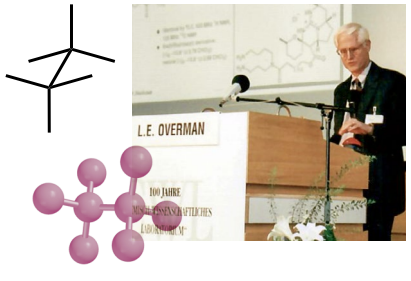
3 The 1980s and 90s: Heterocyclization Reactions 65

3.1 My growing involvement in natural products total synthesis **67**
3.2 Iminium ion cyclizations of vinyl-silanes and alkynes: synthesis of poison-frog alkaloids **75**
3.3 Pinacol-terminated cationic cyclization reactions **80**
3.4 Sabbatical in Hannover, Germany, 1985 **89**



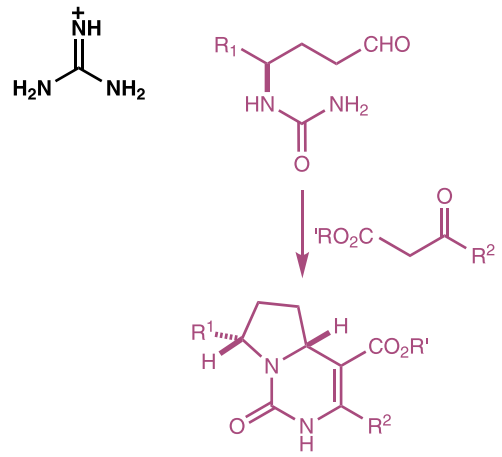
4 The 1980s, 90s and 2000s: Pd-Catalyzed Reactions 95

4.1 Intramolecular Heck reactions **97**
4.2 Catalytic enantioselective intra-molecular Heck reactions **109**
4.3 Catalytic enantioselective reactions of alkenes **121**
4.4 1993 was a special year **127**



5 The 1990s and 2000s: Alkaloid Total Synthesis 131

5.1 Tethered Biginelli reactions and guanidinium alkaloids **133**
5.2 Sarain A **143**
5.3 Epidithiodioxopiperazine (ETP) natural products and tricyclic analogs **150**
5.4 Solvent purification systems **155**



6 Fragment Coupling with Tertiary-Carbon Radicals 159

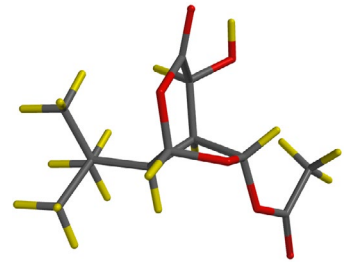
6.1 Investigations of *tert*-butyl analogs of macfarlandin E **161**
6.2 Total synthesis of (–)-aplyviolene: fragment-coupling reactions of tertiary-carbon radicals **165**

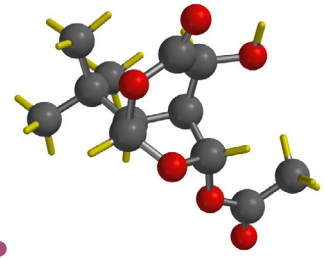
7 Professional Activities 175

7.1 *Organic Reactions* and *Organic Syntheses* **177**
7.2 U.S. National Academy of Sciences **182**
7.3 Industrial associations **184**
7.4 Sabbaticals and visiting professorships **187**

8 Coworkers, Friends, Hobbies, and My Family 189

8.1 Coworkers made it possible and enjoyable **191**
8.2 Thoughts on building a research group and mentoring **194**
8.3 David MacMillan, 2021 Chemistry Nobel Prize **196**
8.4 My choice to remain at UC Irvine for my academic career **198**
8.5 Family, friends, recreation and hobbies **201**
8.6 Joanne and our family **203**





Appendix 207

Afterword **209**
Acknowledgement **210**
Vita **211**
Chemistree **212**
Holographs **215**
Publications **226**
Patents **244**
Links **247**
Image sources **249**
Index **250**