

Dr. Agnes M. Rimando



Dr. Agnes M. Rimando passed away on July 12, 2018 after a short illness. She was born in the Philippines on Oct. 17, 1957. She received a B.S. and a M.S. in Pharmacy from the University of the Philippines in 1980 and 1985, respectively, and a Ph.D. in Pharmacognosy from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 1993. She was an instructor at the University of the Philippines from 1981-85 and a Research Trainee at Hiroshima University School of Medicine in 1985-87. She worked as a research chemist for USDA, Agricultural Research Service from 1994-until her death. From 1996, she was located at the Natural Products Utilization Research Unit in Oxford, Mississippi.

She was a world famous natural products chemist, authoring almost 200 scientific papers and acting as editor of several books on the chemistry of plants. Agnes was the recipient of many prestigious awards, including: Fellow of the American Chemical Society, Fellow of the Agricultural and Food Division of the American Chemical Society, the Kenneth A. Spencer Award for outstanding achievement in food and agricultural chemistry, the Federal Laboratory Consortium Excellence in Technology Transfer Award, the USDA, ARS Mid South Area Technology Transfer Award, and the USDA, ARS Mid South Area Senior Scientist of the Year Award. She was elected to the Philippine American Academy of Science and Engineering. Agnes was an invited speaker to many scientific meetings throughout the world, often serving as the keynote or plenary speaker.

Her many contributions to the American Chemical Society included Chair of the Agricultural and Food Division of the American Chemical Society, American Chemical Society Councilor, the International Activities Committee, as well as service in many other capacities. She served as President of the American Council for Medicinally Active Plants.

Her expertise on the chemistry of plants was sought out by many. For example, she served as a consultant all over the world for the USDA and the US State Department (e.g., in Rwanda, and Colombia). She was fearless about going anywhere or tackling any problem.

The research for which she is best known is her extensive work on the health benefits of pterostilbene, a constituent of grapes and blueberries. Her findings were extensively covered by the popular press, and this publicity gave a boost to blueberry production worldwide. Several of her discoveries related to pterostilbene were patented. Products based on these patents are sold throughout the world.

She is survived by her mother, four sisters, two brothers, and a large extended family. Her many friends, co-workers, and collaborators will greatly miss her.