



Louis J Ignarro

A native of Brooklyn, NY, Dr. Ignarro studied chemistry and pharmacy at Columbia University (1958-1962) before earning his PhD in Pharmacology at the University of Minnesota (1966). In 1968, he completed a postdoctoral fellowship in chemical pharmacology at the NIH. Subsequently, Dr. Ignarro was recruited by Ciba-Geigy Pharmaceuticals to lead the anti-inflammatory drug development program. His work led to the development of diclofenac (Voltaren^R). In 1973, he left drug industry for academia.

At Tulane University School of Medicine, Dr. Ignarro developed his basic research into nitric oxide and cyclic GMP. He joined UCLA School of Medicine in 1985 to further advance his research. In 1995, Dr. Ignarro became Distinguished Professor of Pharmacology at UCLA, where he currently serves as Professor Emeritus. At UCLA, he excelled as both a research scientist and professor, winning 13 consecutive annual Golden Apple teaching awards from medical students.

Some of his notable discoveries include: nitric oxide is produced by vascular endothelial cells, relaxes vascular smooth muscle, lowers blood pressure, improves blood flow, prevents stroke and myocardial infarction, is the mediator of erectile function, and is responsible for the action of nitroglycerin.

Dr. Ignarro was awarded the 1998 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, along with Robert F. Furchgott and Ferid Murad, “for their discovery that nitric oxide acts as a signaling molecule in the cardiovascular system”. He also has received the American Heart Association’s Basic Research Prize and Distinguished Scientist Award “for the advancement of cardiovascular science”, the Roussel UCLAF Prize in France “for cell communication and signaling”, the CIBA Award for Hypertension Research, the Canadian Medal of Merit, and the Golden Plate Award “for outstanding contributions in cardiovascular research”.

A prolific scholar, Dr. Ignarro has published numerous articles and books. He is the founder of the Nitric Oxide Society and is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Medicine, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Philosophical Society.