From academia to industry and back – A personal account

K. Altmann[1]

[1]ETH Zurich, Department of Chemistry and Applied Biosciences, Vladimir-Prelog-Weg 4, Zurich, Switzerland - karl-heinz.altmann@pharma.ethz.ch

Since I had the pleasure of being awarded honorary membership of the Swiss Chemical Society last year, I have been asked to provide an account of my professional career at this year's fall meeting, which I will try to recount in this presentation. It is a journey that started in 1976 with undergraduate studies in chemistry at the Johannes-Gutenberg University in Mainz, continued with doctoral studies at the University of Basel and postdoctoral work at Cornell University and the University of Lausanne and finally (it seemed) led me to enter the realm of industrial research at Ciba-Geigy and later Novartis, where I spent 13 years of my career. However, somewhat unexpectedly, I was still in for a major (!) change, when I was offered a professorship at ETH Zurich in 2003, where I am now a professor emeritus. Scientifically, this journey has led from peptides (PhD and postdoctoral work) to nucleosides and oligonucleotides (Ciba-Geigy) and on to medicinal chemistry and natural products, which have been my (scientific) passions for more than two decades. In this presentation, I will look back at some of the highlights and lowlights (perhaps) of these years in industry and academia (scientific and otherwise).