



PHARMACOLOGY FRIDAY OCTOBER 16, 2026

Continuing Our Look Back at the Chairs Who Shaped UW Pharmacology

Based on reflections by Frank F. Vincenzi, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Pharmacology

This week, we turn to Dr. Akira “Aki” Horita, who served twice as Acting Chair, from 1972–1975 and again from 1983–1984. Drawing on Frank Vincenzi’s recollections, this week’s feature looks back at Dr. Horita’s career and his role in the department’s history.

Akira “Aki” Horita graduated from the University of Washington in 1950 with a B.A. in Zoology. He applied to the School of Medicine but was not accepted. One member of the Admissions Committee was Dr. James Madison Dille, Chair of the Department of Pharmacology, who recognized a bright young scholar and suggested that Aki might want to pursue research in pharmacology. The rest is history.

Aki completed M.S. and Ph.D. degrees and joined the faculty as an instructor in 1954. He later took a leave of absence to serve in the Armed Forces before returning to UW. In 1958, he became an Assistant Professor and rose through the ranks to Professor.

Aki became a pioneer in neuropharmacology, with research exploring how neurotransmitters, neurohormones, and drugs affect the central and autonomic nervous systems. By the time he retired, his CV included more than 200 peer-reviewed publications.

Following Dr. Dille’s many years as chair and a period of transition in the department, Aki was appointed Acting Chair in 1972. He served in that capacity for three years during an extended search for the department’s next permanent chair. Afterward, he returned to his very active and successful lab. Aki later stepped in once again as Acting Chair from 1983–1984, helping guide the department through another leadership transition.

In addition to his research and service as Acting Chair, Aki was known as a dedicated teacher and mentor who helped train generations of Pharmacology students and young scientists.

Open Enrollment Begins October 26

UW’s annual Open Enrollment period runs October 26–November 23. Benefits-eligible employees can review or make changes to their 2027 medical, dental, vision, and other benefit elections.

Even if you don’t plan to make changes, it’s a good time to review your current selections and make sure everything looks correct and up to date.

Open Enrollment is also the time to enroll or re-enroll in optional pre-tax savings programs, including an FSA, LFSA, or DCAP.

Visit the [UW Open Enrollment webpage](#) for plan details, comparison tools, and important dates.

Upcoming Events

October 19, 2026: UW Medicine Town Hall, 3:00 PM, [Submit Questions and Zoom Info](#)

October 20, 2026: Seminar - Dr. Ivan Soltesz, 2:30 PM, Room K-069

October 27, 2026: Seminar - Dr. Sita Kugel, 2:30 PM, Room K-069

October 28, 2026: PhD Thesis Defense - Deziree Coleman, 3:00 PM, Room K-069

Staff Notes

Please note the following out-of-office dates:

Angie: October 9, 19 - 23

Do you have news to share? Please email phcol@uw.edu and use the subject line: Pharmacology Friday.

