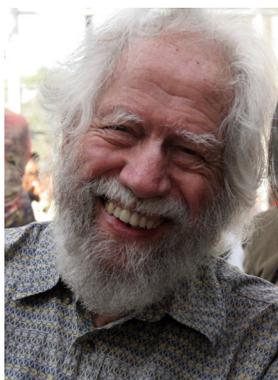


Alexander “Sasha” Shulgin, Ph.D.

June 17, 1925–June 2, 2014



ON JUNE 2, 2014, AT THE age of 88, pioneering psychedelic researcher Alexander “Sasha” Shulgin died surrounded by friends and family at his home in Lafayette, California. In addition to discovering hundreds of novel psychedelic compounds, Sasha was best known for introducing the world to the therapeutic use of MDMA. If it were not for Sasha’s work, MAPS—and much of the world-

wide psychedelic research community—would not exist.

After an early psychedelic experience with mescaline, Sasha had an epiphany. “I understood that our entire universe is contained in the mind and the spirit,” he said. “We may choose not to find access to it, we may even deny its existence, but it is indeed there inside us, and there are chemicals that can catalyze its availability.”

It was in 1976 that he first made MDMA in his home laboratory, after finding a relatively easy way to make the compound

that had been patented by Merck in 1914. He wrote that he was “overcome by the profundity of the experience” and later passed along a small amount to Leo Zeff, encouraging its use in a therapeutic setting.

Sasha published, along with his wife Ann, two books in the 1990s: *PiHKAL: A Chemical Love Story* and *TiHKAL: The Continuation*. The books describe his work creating and experimenting with psychoactive compounds. He encouraged their use for personal growth, cautioning readers to “Use them with respect as to the transformations they can achieve, and you have an extraordinary research tool. Go banging about with a psychedelic drug for a Saturday night turn-on, and you can get into a really bad place.”

In 2011, his life’s work was published in *The Shulgin Index, Volume 1: Psychedelic Phenethylamines and Related Compounds*. While the first volume contains over 1,300 compounds, there is more to come. *The Shulgin Index, Volume 2* will be published in the near future. Sasha understood that the exploration of novel psychoactive compounds—and ways to use them—would not be completed in his lifetime, so he preserved his research in these volumes for future generations.

Sasha lived to see a worldwide renewal of psychedelic science and medicine, and our gratitude for his life and work is limitless.

Sasha Shulgin’s Laboratory by Geneva Photography (sublime-visions.org).

