

In Memoriam Professor Emeritus Stjepan ŠČAVNIČAR (31.10.1923–14.02.2011)



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Stjepan Ščavničar, Professor emeritus of Mineralogy at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, University of Zagreb, passed away quietly at his home in Zagreb, on 14 February 2011. He was one of a small group of devoted teachers and researchers who substantially helped to advance mineralogy and crystallography in Croatia.

Professor Ščavničar was born on 31 October 1923 in Štrigova, near the town of Čakovec in northern Croatia. He obtained his BSc degree in geology at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (FNSM) in 1951, being one of this school's earliest students after World War II. Soon after graduation, he began teaching courses in mineralogy and crystallography, paying special attention to details of morphology and structure.

In 1956, on completion of his PhD at the same university, Ščavničar was appointed an assistant lecturer in the Department of Geology of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at the University of Zagreb. A scholarship from the French government took him to Paris where he spent the

academic year of 1956/57 at the Sorbonne. He and Professor Jean Wyart (1902–1992), his host in the Laboratory for mineralogy and crystallography, soon became friends for life. Together they pioneered the modern HTHP hydrothermal synthesis of beryl.

Returning from Paris, Ščavničar progressed through the ranks of assistant professor (1960–1965), associate professor (1965–1969) and full professor. He was the head of the Institute of Mineralogy and Petrology from 1974 until his retirement in 1994. During his lengthy period as chair, the Institute of Mineralogy and Petrology grew considerably in terms of staff, which also resulted in a substantially wider scope of research activities. He was elected *Professor emeritus* in 2000.

Ščavničar also headed and developed another department, the Division for Materials Research in the early days of the Rudjer Bošković Institute in Zagreb (1952–1974). Under his chairmanship, both departments, the Institute of Mineralogy and Petrology and the Division for Materials Research were equipped with state-of-the-art equipment including modern instrumental arrays. He led and managed teams of young investigators who worked on the development of new methods and analytical techniques in the fields of crystallography, mineralogy and material research. Some components of X-ray diffraction apparatus and spectrometers are still in use to this day. His contributions to crystal structural investigations opened the way for collaboration and the establishment of many scientific groups, not only in Croatia but also beyond.

It should be noted that the move of the Institute of Mineralogy and Petrology to its present location was initiated during the final year of Ščavničar's chairmanship. He was retired before the move was completed, but he was well involved in the entire process.



Stjepan Ščavničar has been awarded a lifelong achievement award in 1991.

He was Vice-Dean (1968–1970) of FNSM and Dean of the Natural Sciences departments (1984–1986).

As Dean of the Faculty he took a leading role in strategic choices about the long-term development of science and technology in Croatia. He was gruff, modest, friendly, tolerant, far-sighted and clear-minded, and an avid lover of art and Bordeaux wines. His lectures were not always easy to follow, but they were always very interesting. It was characteristic for Ščavničar to speak about his ongoing research in class and this was very much appreciated by his students.

In 1973 Ščavničar became an associate member of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (former Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts), and was elected to full membership in 1990.

Ščavničar received the “Rudjer Bošković” scientific award in 1971, followed by a professorship of merit of the University of Zagreb in 1989, the life-achievement award in 1991 and the roll of honour of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in 1996.

Professor Ščavničar was a founding member of the Croatian Crystallographic Association of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. He was the first president of the Croatian Mineralogical Association and president of the Geochemistry Council of Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. He was also an honorary member of the Croatian Geological Society.

He was on the editorial board of *Geološki vjesnik* (now *Geologia Croatica*) for many years (from volume 37 – 1984 to 43 – 1990).

Professor Ščavničar was a long-time member of the Mineralogical society of America, as well as other learned societies in Croatia and abroad. He was nominated for scientist of the year in 2002 (IBC Cambridge – International Biographical Center).

Stjepan Ščavničar is survived by his wife Biserka (former Morić), a daughter and two grandsons.

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Vladimir Bermanec

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