

## IN MEMORIAM

## Professor Ivo Mlinarić, MD, PhD

Professor Ivo Mlinarić, MD, PhD, one of the last surgery greats not only in Croatia but also in the region, died on December 20, 2010 at Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital. The great man, scientist, humanist, physician, teacher, colleague and friend left us forever. Medical circles knew him for his achievements in the field of surgery, oncologic surgery in particular. He died in the hospital, where he completed his active life in surgery some twenty years before. The end of his active life brought only a minor change in his working rhythm, as he continued his engagement in many other fields such as Croatian League against Cancer, traffic medicine, enthusiastic work in the Academy of Medical Sciences of Croatia, writing books on the history of surgery, and publication of scientific papers. He departed this life peacefully, not talking about his disease but about what else he had to do, to write and to transfer to his young fellows.

Likewise many of his colleagues, medical professionals of the time, the life of Prof. Ivo Mlinarić was not a rose garden. He also had to move frequently, to change work places, settings and environment, along with continuous learning and hard work in surgery, which did not spare him either. The generations of today wonder how he could manage all this, and even turning it into a brilliant career.



Ivo Mlinarić was born on May 7, 1922 in Vinkovci, finished high school in Bihać in 1941 and enrolled in the Zagreb School of Medicine in the same year, where he graduated from in 1947. His one-year internship he served at General Hospital in Rijeka, then worked as county physician in Delinice and Fužine (1948-1950), and served his residency in surgery at General Hospital in Zadar, where he founded Blood Transfusion Unit. In 1956, he passed his specialist exam at University Department of Surgery, Rebro University Hospital and continued working at Dr Ozren Novosel General Hospital as deputy head of Surgery Department (head, Prof. Branko Oberhofer, MD, PhD). In 1961, he worked as head of Department of Surgery, Virovitica Medical Center, and from 1963 to 1965 as head of the respective department in Bjelovar. From 1965, he worked as deputy head of University Department of Surgery, Dr Mladen Stojanović University Hospital (head, Prof. Branko Oberhofer, MD, PhD), and from 1983 to his retirement as head of University Department of Surgery, Zagreb University School of Medicine and School of Dental Medicine. He was full professor at Zagreb University School of Medicine, actively engaged in undergraduate and postgraduate educational activities. He also held lectures at numerous postgraduate courses. Along with his work at Uni-

versity Department of Surgery, Dr Mladen Stojanović University Hospital, he introduced experimental work on animal models to master open-heart surgery, thus initiating development of cardiac surgery in the region. Before his retirement, Prof. Mlinarić finished construction of the new wing of the University Department of Surgery, where the polyclinic, modern intensive care unit and other services are located. Upon his retirement, he continued working as consultant at Department of Surgery, Bjelovar General Hospital, until 1991, when he took active part in the Croatian Army Medical Corps and acted as head of the war hospital at Southern Frontline. Upon his return to Zagreb, he held the course of traffic medicine for students of the Faculty of Traffic Sciences. He was also active in the Croatian League against Cancer as its long-standing chair. He was active member of the Academy of Medical Sciences of Croatia and member of the Academy Senate until his death. In 2008, he was declared Academy Laureate.

Prof. Mlinarić took active part in numerous congresses in Croatia and abroad, having presented his

contributions at all congresses held in the region in the past thirty years. He published 250 professional and scientific papers in Croatian and international journals, and six books including his role as editor to the book entitled *Povijest kirurških struka u Hrvatskoj* (The History of Surgical Professions in Croatia). He was member of many professional societies in Croatia and abroad, and winner of a number of awards and orders.

In recent years, I frequently met our "Dear", as we – his disciples and coworkers – used to call him, on the island of Vir, to which he was tightly linked throughout his life and unselfishly helped the islanders. Even then, in his old age, he always talked about surgery, never complaining of difficulties but trying, at least in conversation, to help solve its many problems. I am proud to have lived and worked in his time. He left his children behind, his three daughters also with rich medical university careers, so his ideas, solutions and advice will certainly outlive him for long and leave a profound imprint in Croatian medicine.

*Mario Ledinsky*