

OBITUARY

DUŠAN JAKAC

(Veli Mlun, 1906 – Zagreb, 2005)



On February 21, 2005, death took from us Professor Dušan Jakac, MD, PhD, the greatest dermatovenereologist. During his rich life as a real treasure of knowledge on dermatovenereology in Croatia and Europe, he witnessed dreadful epidemics such as Spanish flue, syphilis and recently AIDS. Jakac's career illustrates the medical and cultural times in a striking way. While preparing a manuscript entitled Dušan Jakac: the life in dermatovenereology (*Acta Dermatovenerol Croat* 2003;11(1):6-9), Dr. Fatović-Ferenčić and I met him at his Zagreb apartment, when he answered promptly and enthusiastically our one-hour queries. Thanking him warmly, we can only say that talking to Dušan Jakac was a unique experience for us. We have been preparing a book on the history of dermatovenereology in Croatia and wanted to hear him again, unfortunately, inexorable death did not give us another opportunity to enjoy the company of this extraordinary man. Dušan Jakac was a distinguished expert who bequathed us with his invaluable contribution to the profession: as a true pioneer, he was the first to recognize occupational skin diseases in Croatia; he was a superb educator and administrator with a natural sense of integrity and fairness; a leader in Croatian dermatovenereology; he was gentle yet strict with his subordinates and extremely tolerant of his col-

leagues; he was known for his love of linguistics, especially Croatian, Italian, Latin; he was author to more than 100 articles and a number of books. His pioneer activities included foundation of dermatovenereology in Rijeka. In 1957, he was appointed head of the University Department of Dermatology and Venereology.

Dušan Jakac was born in Veli Mlun near Buzet, in his beloved Istria, Croatia, on June 3, 1906. He attended classic high school in Pazin, then he moved to Karlovac and Zagreb, where he graduated in 1927. His classic education in several languages enabled Jakac to enroll in the School of Medicine in Padua, Italy, then in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and finally in Zagreb, where he graduated in 1934. At Department of Dermatovenereology, Zagreb School of Medicine, he volunteered and completed specialization in dermatovenereology in 1939, and was appointed assistant in 1943. In 1946, Jakac was offered employment in Zagreb and in Rijeka; he chose his beloved Istria and pioneered there by founding dermatovenereology in Rijeka. In 1957, he was appointed head of the University Department of Dermatology at the newly founded School of Medicine in Rijeka. In 1961, he was appointed Associate Professor and in 1965 Professor of Dermatovenereology. During the 1959-1965 period, Jakac was vice-dean, dean and then again vice-dean of the Rijeka School of Medicine. He was president to a number of sections and societies of dermatovenereology, member of editorial boards of various journals, and a true doyen of the Croatian dermatovenereology.

His professional legacy has placed him among the most prominent Croatian dermatovenereologists of the 20th century.

Professor Jasna Lipozenčić, MD, PhD

Editor-in-Chief