
IN MEMORIAM

Prof. Vladimir Amšel 1926 - 2001

In the early morning of 14th September 2001 Prof. Vladimir Amšel, retired Professor of the School of Dental Medicine University of Zagreb, died. A few hours beforehand we had visited him and shown our support in his fight against his illness. He had expressed a wish to say a last farewell to his colleagues, his pupils who carry on his work, and his profession, to which he wholeheartedly belonged. Although we were unable to make verbal contact we were by his side, "his boys", as he slowly relinquished his hold on life.

Prof. Vladimir Amšel was born on 10 July 1926 in Zagreb. He attended primary school in Zagreb, Belgrade and Travnik, and high school in Travnik and Zagreb, where he graduated. He finished middle medical school in Zagreb in 1946, after which he enrolled at the College for Physical Education in Zagreb and graduated in 1948. The same year he enrolled at the School of Medicine in Zagreb and graduated at the Department of Dental Medicine of the same School in 1955.

On 1 December 1960 he was elected Assistant in the Department of Dental Surgery of the Medical School in Zagreb. After the School of Dental Medicine became independent in 1962 he worked in the Department of Oral Surgery up until his retirement on 30 September 1989. Over the years he advanced through all scientific vocations up until full professor. As a scholar of the World Health Organisation he spent time improving his knowledge in Graz, Zürich and Düsseldorf. In 1970 he defended his habilitation paper and was elected Assistant Professor. In 1980 he was elected Associate Professor and in 1987 Professor. His scientific and professional work is reflected in sixty published papers and participation in numerous congresses, symposiums and professional meetings. As a specialist in oral surgery he taught many specialists, and as a scientific-teaching worker, thirty generations of dentists, who today work in Croatia and abroad. All who knew him will remember his cheerful face, his dynamic work in the Oral-surgical Out-patient Department, or during operations, and his sonorous voice and laugh, which could often be heard when he was present. On two occasions he was Vice-Dean and from 1985 to 1989 he carried out the duties of Dean of the School

of Dental Medicine University of Zagreb. For some years he was President of the Croatian Dental Society, and in 1981, for his work in the Croatian Medical Association, he was awarded the "Ladislav Rakovac" medal. He was a member of the Croatian Academy of Medical Sciences.

As a sportsman he had always loved artistic skating, and he became an international judge in the sport and participated in many competitions all over the world. The "Golden Pirouette" in Zagreb would not be what it is today without the help of Prof. Amšel.

It can be said that he was interested in all areas of oral surgery. He made exceptional contributions in dental implantology, diagnostics of carcinoma - in which field he wrote his doctoral dissertation - and complications in dental surgery.

His method of conservative treatment of antrooral communication with a palatal plate is today a routine procedure in oral surgery, although many are unaware of who first introduced this method.

Prof. Vladimir Amšel was the first to introduce modern teaching methods at the School of Dental Medicine, by using internal television and transmitting operations from the operating theatre to the lecture hall of the School.

Seneca once said that the incredible speed of time is best observed when we look back. Although it seems like only yesterday that he left the School, the eleven years since Prof. Amšel left the School have left their mark. Namely, younger generations of students no longer know him, and thus his name is connected with oral surgery more as an institution. Those of us who were his pupils frequently refer to his work and his contribution to the development of the profession during lectures. He was a perfect gentleman, a man without fault. He approached every idea with enthusiasm and always succeeded in realising them.

We were lucky to have been his pupils, and proud to have shared with him work places and happy and sad moments in the Department of Oral Surgery. Although Prof. Vladimir Amšel is no longer physically with us, his name will continue to be prominent in the history of the School of Dental Medicine University in Zagreb, and Croatian dentistry as a whole.

Dear Professor, rest in peace, in the land you loved so much.

Goran Knežević