

In Memoriam Ivan Jurković Fellow of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Professor Emeritus University of Zagreb



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Geologia Croatica

On 30th December 2014 at the age of 98 years, after a period of declining health, we lost a prominent Croatian geologist, a long time fellow of The Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, public employee – Minister of Science, rector of the University of Zagreb, when Professor Emeritus of the Faculty of Mining and Geology Ivan Jurković passed away. As well as being a geologist (the field where his lifelong work was dedicated) his loss was accepted with sadness in the circle of Soil Scientists as well as Agricultural scientists.

We remember him primarily as a superior intellectual, naturalist, with a special, subtle feeling for the moment, particularly the right moment in science and higher education and his ability to choose the right direction with an uncompromising commitment to the implementation of carefully selected and designed solutions to problems. In the history of Croatian science he was responsible for a major step forward marked by the beginning of an “Era of Information technology” period with the founding of the University Computing Centre, University of Zagreb (SRCE), as well as the construction, creation of the concept and framework of activities of the National and University Library (NSK), for which he laid the cornerstone.

In addition to leaving a deep and indelible mark in the development of mining geology and geological services in Croatia and the former Yugoslavia, the academician Jurković is merited with the inventory of natural resources of Croatia. Jurković was resolutely focused, (at a time when it was needed) on the production of the Geological map and especially the General Soil Map of Croatia (GSM) at a scale of 1:50 000. As he oversaw the creation of the GSM he noted down problems and noticed some weaknesses in its preparation. The scientific project General Soil Map of Croatia was not easy to authorize, especially when inaugurated as a long-term project that will “outlive the mandate of the Minister”.

His request was that the pedocartographic work engaged all institutions and qualified individuals experienced in this specific research area, which included field work, laboratory soil analysis as well as preparation of the map and textbook, for each area of the map across the territory of Croatia. He observed problems and solved them in specific research

projects. This meant the coordination of the work of experts based on small, narrow research areas, with different habits, levels of knowledge, experience and styles of working. Jurković particularly stressed (when the Project Council of the Soil Map of Croatia at a scale of 1:50 000 was formed and entrusted to him), the importance of preserving the creativity and personality as valuable characteristics of the individuals involved in the project. As the geomorphology, geological – lithological structure directs the process and results of soil genesis, Prof. Jurković supported the project and acquired the advice of Mirko Malez, a very experienced fellow of the Croatian Academy, who has always been a great help.

Professor Emeritus Ivan Jurković was among the few who understand the peculiarities of Agricultural Sciences. These are related to the fact that when researching perennial species, the biological response doesn't match the current treatment and pattern of studies, so the results cannot be expected in the normal course of the four year project period. Neither before nor since, has a Minister with such understanding been in post. Numerous particular and Zagreb located institutes were linked in the unique Agricultural Institute of Zagreb. One of his assistants was an agronomist.

Prof. Ivan Jurković acquired and held his high reputation both at home and abroad, as well as teaching, research and being a public servant. His erudition, self-sacrificing work and attitude towards work were a role model for younger Faculty Members.

It is safe to say that he has left a deep and indelible mark in the Croatian sciences, in agricultural sciences and higher education.

We express genuine empathy with our fellow geologists, and extend the same feelings to the respected family Jurković. May his great and wide soul rest in peace.

Ferdo Bašić

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