

TWO NOTABLE ANNIVERSARIES IN CROATIAN OPHTHALMOLOGY IN 2007

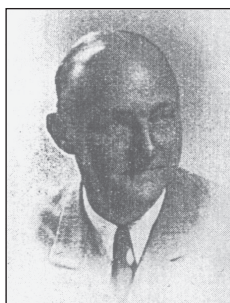


Head Doctor Jelka Spevec née Gutchy, MD, PhD, an outstanding lady, departed this life just thirty years ago. At the beginning of the 20th century, there were few women medical students, so that in Croatia, there were about a dozen women physicians until the end of World War I, one of them Head

Doctor Jelka Spevec. She was born in 1886 in the well-known Gutchy family of physicians, and enrolled in medical studies in Graz in 1916. During her studies, she went to Prague and Vienna, and graduated from the Vienna School of Medicine in 1922. Upon her return to Zagreb, she served her residency at Department of Ophthalmology in our Hospital, where she worked until her

retirement in 1959. Eighteen years ago, in 1927, she was appointed our first female ophthalmologist, ten years later she received the title of Head Doctor, and served residency in ophthalmologic surgery at Hôtel-Dieu in Paris with Professor Terrien. The professional interest of Head Doctor Jelka Spevec-Gutchy was focused on the operative aspect of the profession and was the first to introduce the method of lacrimal canal reconstruction (dacryocystorhinostomy) in collaboration with Professor Ante Šercer.

Dr. Spevec suffered a severe, chronic disease, coping with her condition with dignity. She was one of those brave women whose example will have been followed by many others in the 20th century, trying to prove that medicine is a field where they can display all their professional, scientific and humane abilities.



This year, 50 years have passed since the death of **Head Doctor Neven Čosić, MD**, a renowned Croatian ophthalmologist, in 1957, who had started his career at our Hospital. Dr. Čosić was born in 1883. Upon completing his elementary school and high school, he enrolled in medical studies in Inns-

bruck, however, it was interrupted by World War I and he was appointed by the army to work at our Department of Ophthalmology. After the war, he graduated in Lavov, and returned to our Department of Ophthalmology, where he served residency in ophthalmology. He was founder and longstanding head of Department of Ophthalmology in Šibenik General Hospital, then the largest hospital in Dalmatia (1921-1941). During Italian occupation, he moved back to Zagreb to work at the Department of Ophthalmology where he had started his

career 20 years before. He was among the first in the then state to perform the operative procedure for retinal detachment in Šibenik in 1937, with enviable success. At that time, he also introduced the procedure of intracapsular cataract extraction, and was very successful in plastic and reconstructive surgery of the eye and ocular adnexa. Upon his return to our Department, and especially upon being appointed head of Department in 1948, he invested all his efforts to reconstruct and renew the obsolete Department structure and equipment, to supply it with modern instrumentarium, and to upgrade education of young professionals to fill the post-war gap. As a strong-willed person, he long resisted the severe disease that affected him in the period of his most fruitful and most intensive professional activity. Due to the disease, he had to leave Department he lived for earlier than he would have been willing to.

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