

In-memoriam: Stevo Julius

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Stevo Julius graduated from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Zagreb. In 1965, he joined the faculty of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where he spent his working life, working almost until the last years of his life as an active retired (emeritus) professor of medicine and physiology. His research contributions in the field of hypertension and contributions to education on arterial hypertension, earned Stevo Julius an international reputation. He always proudly emphasized his ties to the homeland that educated him and from which he set out on his life's adventure.

Stevo Julius was born in 1929 in Kovin, on the banks of the Danube in Serbia, where he lived until he was eleven years old, when he moved with his family to Zagreb. He spent his childhood and youth in Zagreb, but the chaos of World War II also caught up with him there. He described that period, and the following year, in his book "Neither Red nor Dead", the Croatian edition of which was presented to the public at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Zagreb. Stevo Julius graduated from high school in 1947 in Zagreb and the same year enrolled at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Zagreb, graduating in 1953. Both the years after the war and after graduation were turbulent for Stevo Julius, because he spent the initial part of his working life in Goražde, according to the decree. He finally began to build his

professional and scientific career at the Clinical Hospital Center Zagreb, at Rebro, and at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Zagreb, from where he left for his first stay in the United States of America, in Ann Arbor, in 1962. Because of the agreement that existed between the United States of America and Yugoslavia, he returned to Zagreb again, completed his specialization and received his doctorate. Due to the excellent impression he left in Ann Arbor, he received an invitation and an offer he could not refuse, and since 1965 he has been continuing his career and life in Ann Arbor.

In his prolific scientific work, Stevo Julius has published more than 330 papers, book chapters and written several books. Some of his works are fundamental works for the understanding of arterial hypertension and enter the history of medicine along with Gyton, Laragh, Pickering, Pagae, Kaplan and other stalwarts of hypertension.

While still in Zagreb, Professor Julius showed an interest in understanding arterial hypertension, especially the role of the autonomic nervous system. His dissertation from 1962 was dedicated to this topic, as the title itself clearly states: "Psychosomatic characteristics of students with borderline high blood pressure".

Julius devoted the largest period of his research to the early phase of arterial hypertension, sometimes called borderline hypertension. Very early on, he noticed that there is a connection between the mechanisms that lead to the onset and maintenance of arterial hypertension, and a greater tendency to obesity in hypertensive patients, which he described excellently in one of his articles - "Hypertension and Obesity - a Two-Way Street". One could say that the crown of his research is the Tecumseh study, which is actually a small Framingham. It is smaller in terms of the number of subjects included and the duration of monitoring, but it produced some results that the Framingham study did not. This study is visionary and far ahead of its time in terms of its design because it is a blatant example and represents a model for how translational research in medicine should be organized. One of the key dilemmas that Professor Julius tried to resolve is how initial borderline hypertension transitions into permanent arterial hypertension, i.e. how the state of initially increased cardiac output transitions into a state of increased peripheral resistance.

Stevo Julius was involved in almost all the seminal interventional studies that strongly influenced today's guidelines such as HOT, LIFE and VALUE. All the time, he was thinking about whether it is possible to stop or at least delay the transition from the initial phase to stable arterial hypertension by short-term use of antihypertensive drugs. He realized that part of his dream in the TROPHY study, where he proved it. This revolutionary study

confirmed that this concept is correct and possible, and opened the door to a whole series of research that will probably answer the question of which of these patients in the initial phase of arterial hypertension, i.e. in the phase of prehypertension should be treated in this way.

Stevo Julius has consistently participated in all major conferences organized by the Croatian Hypertension Society, of which he is an honorary member. Since 2006, he has been a visiting professor at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Zagreb, and on his initiative, a cooperation agreement was signed in 2010 between the University of Ann Arbor and the Faculty of Medicine in Zagreb, opening the doors to numerous young Croatian experts and scientists.

He described his scientific life path in his book “Adventures in Hypertension”, which was translated by the Croatian Hypertension Society and a Croatian edition is available. During Stevo’s last stay, we were discussing a second edition, which we will now unfortunately have to do without him. That is a book that should be read by anyone who is in any way involved in arterial hypertension, medicine, or science. But it is also a book that can teach everyone important things in life. How to persevere, believe, learn, respect others, and always keep your spirit and sense of humor. Anyone who reads the book and goes through these adventures will be richer for a new experience, for a new journey.

As a sign of gratitude for all his achievements, for his tireless emphasis on where he came from, connecting it with his personal life success, the Croatian Society of Hypertension and the Croatian League of Hypertension organized a major international conference in 2022 called the “Stevo Julius Conference”, which was attended by leading experts from all continents. It is not necessary to describe his feeling of happiness, which was no less than the feeling of happiness of those of us who loved him. And we will always love and remember him for his wisdom, knowledge, gentleness, friendship and especially warm sense of humor. Although we know that we will not meet on these meridians and parallels, Stevo will always be there as an inspiration and encouragement for better and more, and his voice and laughter will resonate in our hearts.



Stevo, accompanied by his son Nikola, is leaving Zagreb after the large international congress “Stevo Julius Conference”. The last photo of him in Zagreb at the Zagreb airport was taken in November 2022 by my son Ivan, who had a particularly close relationship with Stevo, who seemed to have a premonition that we would never see each other again.

