



Remembering our Deserving Scholars



Prof. Emer. VERA JOHANIDES
 Honorary Member
 of the Croatian Academy of Engineering
 1917 – 2000

In 2011 the Croatian Academy of Engineering marked the life and work of its honorary member Prof. Emer. Vera Johanides deceased in 2000 by a becoming symposium. On the occasion a memorial bust was unveiled in the park of the "House of HATZ", the headquarters of the Academy. In this way, the Academy paid tribute to one of its first members, a famous and recognized scientist in the field of biotechnology. This is the beginning of the ongoing activities of the Academy to remember our deserving members who have contributed throughout their life not only to Croatian science but also the world science in general. Namely, science knows no boundaries and is available to all people who by their actions tend to contribute to the prosperity of society, better and safer lives and welfare of the communities they live in. As the student of Prof. Vera Johanides from her first days at the Faculty of Technology and her partner at a later date I can proudly say that she has been just the person whose work deserves a lasting remembrance within the Croatian Academy of Engineering. Biotechnical Center of the Croatian Academy of Engineering was established just after her death and at the moment when the Croatian Academy of Engineering established the annual award for young researchers which carried her name and marked 10 years of uninterrupted award granting in 2011. Biotechnical Center of the Academy, together with the Faculty of Food and Biotechnology in Zagreb launched a project celebrating "the life and work of Prof. Emer. Vera Johanides" which, thanks to donors, members of the Academy and friends, associates of Prof. V. Johanides was successfully completed on November 21st, 2011. List of all donors is permanently inscribed on the memorial.



Prof. Emer. Vera Johanides died in August 2000 at the age of eighty-three. She died quietly, surrounded by her loved ones and thus did not provide the opportunity of parting from her with warm words to all those who knew her, who were her associates, who were her students, whom she throughout her life advised many times, directed to be better, to be even more successful.

During her life Prof. Vera Johanides collected a vast knowledge and experience which she selflessly passed on to her associ-

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ates and acquaintances to the last days of her life. The reader will perhaps only now for the first time learn something about the person who has in her long career of university professor trained a number of engineers, masters and Ph.D.s for industry needs, not only in Croatia, but also in all the areas which today have biotechnology built in development directions of their economy. Prof. Vera Johanides was the founder of biotechnology, and especially biochemical engineering in Croatia, which led to the founding of the first studies of biotechnology even back in 1956, the then part of the Faculty of Technology of the University of Zagreb.

She was born in Tompojevci, the municipality of Vukovar, graduated at Vukovar and stays permanently attached to the area. In 1999 she was one of the initiators and organizers of "The Ružička Days" in Vukovar. She finished her studies in Ljubljana where, by preparing her dissertation in the field of antibiotics in 1955, she acquired first experiences with antibiotics and industrial microbiology in general. She was elected Full Professor of Industrial microbiology and biochemical engineering at the Faculty of Technology of the University of Zagreb in 1964. As early as 1970 she participated in the organization of four post-graduate studies in biochemical engineering and the environment protection. Upon the establishment of the honorary title of Professor Emeritus she was among the first in 1997 to have received the highest rank of the University of Zagreb. Her scientific contribution consists of 110 scientific papers, 53 professional papers and several patents. As a member of many Croatian and foreign scientific societies she has been contributing to the promotion of science. She was vice-chancellor of the University of Zagreb, and for her scientific activities as the founder of biotechnology in this region and the contribution to biotechnology in the world she received many national and international recognitions and awards ("Lavoslav Ružička" and "Purkinja" Medals, Order of Merit for People with Silver Wreath, The City of Zagreb Medal, Charta Rabuziana Recognition, Fran Bosnjakovic Award). She was a signatory to the charter establishing the European Federation of Biotechnology in Interlaken on September 25th, 1978, the lifetime president of the Honorary Committee of Biotechnical Foundation of the Faculty of Food and Biotechnology of the University of Zagreb founded in 1996, and honorary member of the Croatian

Academy of Engineering since 1993.

On the occasion of the symposium that was attended by donor representatives, Rector of the University of Zagreb, Prof. Aleksa Bjeliš, Ph.D. in his opening speech especially recalled the time when Prof. Emer. Vera Johanides was vice-chancellor of the University of Zagreb. Scientists from the Republic of Slovenia, Prof. Peter Raspor,

Ph.D. and Prof. Aleksa Cimerman, Ph.D. pointed to a successful long term relationship with Prof. V. Johanides and declared her the First Lady of Biotechnology in this region.

Celebration of the work of Prof. Emer. Vera Johanides was jointly implemented by the Croatian Academy of Engineering and the Faculty of Food Technology and Biotechnology of the University of Zagreb in cooperation with the Biotechnical Foundation of the Faculty of Food Technology and Biotechnology, Croatian Society of Biotechnology and the donors from the industry. Organizing Committee consisting of the members of the Academy Prof. Marijan Bošnjak, Ph.D., Prof. Jasna Franekić, Ph.D., Prof. Srdjan Novak, Ph.D., Prof. Jagoda Šušković, Ph.D. and Prof. Đurđa Vasić-Rački, Ph.D. chaired by Prof. Jasna Kniewald, Ph.D. in a short period of three months has successfully performed this tedious task of organizing an international symposium.

Memorial bust of Prof. Emer. Vera Johanides is the work of sculptor Prof. Slavomir Drinković, Ph.D. whom we would take this opportunity to thank to, while future generations will assess the true artistic value of the work.



Although donors are listed on the pedestal of the memorial bust, we would also like to mention them here with gratitude since they have contributed to the task in this delicate moment for the economy. These are: Biotechnical Center of the Academy as coordinator and the Faculty of Food and Biotechnology of the University of Zagreb, Biotechnical Faculty of the University of Ljubljana – Republic of Slovenia, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Chemical Engineering and Technology Zagreb, Faculty of Food Technology Osijek, Croatian Society of Biotechnology, PLIVA Croatia Ltd., Zagreb Brewery Inc., the City of Zagreb, the City of Koprivnica, Biotechnical Foundation of FFB, the Center for environment protection and development of sustainable technologies of the Academy and the Foundation of the HATZ.

By departure of Prof. Emer. Vera Johanides all of us have lost, the science in Croatia and abroad have lost, our economy has lost. We are grateful to her for everything she has done. Based on the results of Prof. Vera Johanides young ones continue her journey and build their own and our future.

Prof. Emer. Zlatko Kniewald

