

Distinguished Professor emeritus Martin John Bukovac – Honorary Member of the Croatian Society of Plant Physiologists

Dr. Martin John Bukovac, professor emeritus at Michigan State University, for over 45 years made outstanding contributions to the development of horticultural science. His main interest was in fundamental and applied research on the influence of phytohormones on the development of fruit trees, focusing on flower formation and fruit growth and ripening, and on the mechanisms of cuticular transport. His work resulted in several patents, mainly for growth regulators that are used in the horticultural industry for the regulation of flower formation and fruit development, including controlled thinning. He also studied the influence of phytohormones on the activity of peroxidases, cellulases and pectinases during fruit abscission. For his work, Professor Bukovac was awarded an impressive number of American and international prizes.

Professor Bukovac visited Croatia several times during the nineteen-sixties, -seventies and -eighties. His lectures on the usage of growth regulators in the management of cherry orchards inspired researchers from various regions of Croatia. He actively cooperated with scientists from the Faculty of Agronomy in Zagreb, which resulted in many research programs in the field of plant physiology. In addition, Professor Bukovac and Professor Zvonimir Devidé from the Zagreb Faculty of Natural Sciences maintained close professional and personal ties for many years. Due to these connections, several young research-



ers from the Faculty of Natural Sciences, as well as from the Ruđer Bošković Institute continued their professional careers at Michigan State University.

During his recent visit to Zagreb (September 29th–October 4th, 2004), professor Bukovac was awarded the Spiridon Brusina Medal by the Croatian Society of Natural History (see figure). He delivered the award lecture to the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. During his stay in Zagreb, we also had the privilege of attending his seminar to the Croatian Society of Plant Physiologists after which he was pronounced its honorary member.

Following his return to Michigan, Professor Bukovac expressed his emotions by saying: »For me, this was a once-in-a-lifetime event. I was received like a long lost son returning home (The father of Professor Bukovac moved from Lika (Croatia) to the United States of America just before the First World War. My friends and colleagues re-introduced me to many fantastic traditional dishes, Croatian culture and refreshed my memory of their rich history.«

Hrvoje Fulgosi