

In memoriam

**Professor Ružica Ratajac, PhD
(1940–2015)**



Professor Ružica Ratajac (maiden name Stanojlović) was born in Velika Drenova near Trstenik. She finished elementary school in Velika Drenova in 1954 and high school in Trstenik in 1958. Then she enrolled in Teacher Training College in Niš (Biology-Chemistry teaching) and completed studies in 1961. After college, she returned to Velika Drenova and started working as a biology teacher in the local elementary school. She obtained her Bachelor's degree in biology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad in 1966 with her bachelor's thesis entitled, "Soybean Bacterioses". Upon completion of her bachelor's degree, she worked as a teacher in "Vladimir Nazor" Elementary School in Petrovaradin for three months. On the 1st of November 1966 she became a teaching assistant in Agricultural Zoology at the Faculty of Agriculture in Novi Sad. As a part of internal reorganizational processes at the University of Novi Sad, she changed her workplace and started working at the Institute of Biology, Faculty of Sciences, in 1976. While still working at the Faculty of Agriculture, she enrolled in a graduate course in biology (Study group Taxonomy) at the Faculty of Sciences where she earned her master's degree in 1974, after successful completion of her master's thesis "Copepods in some standing water bodies in Vojvodina". In 1978 she defended her PhD thesis "Seasonal Dynamics and Distribution of Copepods in Some Water Bodies in Vojvodina".

In addition to laboratory classes in Agricultural Zoology for students of the Faculty of Agriculture, she also led study groups in Animal Husbandry and Plant Protection. As a teaching assistant, she also taught laboratory classes to postgraduate students in the Plant Protection program, and during two academic years (1967/68 and 1968/69) she was a teaching assistant in a course, Biology Fundamentals, for students of the Faculty of Technology in Novi Sad.

She obtained all of her academic promotions while teaching the course Agricultural Zoology at the Faculty of Sciences in Novi Sad. In 1979 she became an assistant professor, in 1984 an associate professor and in 1989 a full professor.

In addition to the course, Agricultural Zoology, for students of the Faculty of Agriculture, and study groups in Animal Husbandry and Plant Protection, she also taught certain segments of courses in Hydrobiology, Ichthyology,

Taxonomy and Environmental Protection to students of biology at the Faculty of Sciences in Novi Sad. Moreover, from 1987-1990 she also taught the course Environmental Protection to students of the Faculty of Sciences at the University of Kragujevac.

Due to new integrational processes within University of Novi Sad, prof. Ružica Ratajac returned to the Faculty of Agriculture in 1996 where she continued teaching Agricultural Zoology. She retired on the 1st of October 2005.

The scope of dr Ružica Ratajac's research includes taxonomy, ecology and environmental protection. She was particularly interested in aquatic ecosystems and water quality assessment based on Crustacea bioindicators. She specialized in crustaceans belonging to the Copepoda subclass and her research in this field has been a significant contribution to limnological studies in our region. One segment of her research work was devoted to crustaceans as a nutritional base of fish. She also investigated the influence of pesticides on some aquatic organisms, and towards the end of her working career she also studied mites and ticks.

She published more than 100 papers and took part in more than 50 conferences in our country and abroad.

She is the author of the textbook 'Agricultural Zoology' for students of the Faculty of Agriculture, which was published in 1996. She is also the author of a booklet for students of the Faculty of Agriculture, a co-author of a chapter in three monographs and ten studies, as well as a co-author of a high school textbook.

She took part in several short-term specialization programs: in 1969 at the Institute for Plant Protection in Budapest (Hungary); in 1971 at the University of Agriculture, Zoology Department in Wageningen (Holland); Ichthyological Department of Biological Institute in Brussels (Belgium), Hydrobiological Station and Ichthyological Laboratory in Paris (France); in 1976 at the Agricultural College in Nitra (Zoology Department), Fisheries and Hydrobiology Laboratory in Bratislava (Slovakia); in 1982 at Plovdiv Univeristy 'Paisii Hilendarski', Zoology Department (Bulgaria).

In the period from 1970-1972 she was the secretary of the Plant Protection Department at the Faculty of Agriculture. From 1989 to 1993 she was the deputy director of the

Institute of Biology, Faculty of Sciences in Novi Sad. From 2000 until her retirement, she was the head of the Phyto-medical group at the Department of Phytomedicine and Environmental Protection 'Dr Pavle Vukasović'.

She was a member of the Serbian Biological Society (and the president of the Novi Sad Branch), Biosystematics Society, Water Protection Society, Plant Protection Society and Entomological Society.

She participated in workshops organized as high school teacher seminars by the Pedagogical Institute of the Socialist Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. In 1983 the movement 'Science to the Youth' awarded her with a Federal Coordination Board Award and in 1990 she was awarded The May Day

Prize by Novi Sad Syndicate.

As a person, educator and scholar, dr Ružica Ratajac has left an indelible mark on the Faculty of Sciences in both Novi Sad and Kragujevac. Her colleagues will always remember her excellent cooperation in all teaching and research activities, but above all, they will remember her cheerful personality, her kindness and endless love for the people around her.

Dr. Desanka Kostić, assistant professor

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