

In memoriam

**Professor Gordana Grubor-Lajšić, PhD
(1949-2015)**



Dr. Gordana Grubor-Lajšić, a recently-retired Professor at the University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Sciences, Department of Biology and Ecology passed away in Novi Sad on October 29, 2015.

Professor Gordana Grubor-Lajšić was born in Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina, SFR Yugoslavia) on the 23rd of September 1949. She completed her primary school and Grammar school “Jovan Jovanović Zmaj” in Novi Sad. She obtained her bachelor’s degree in chemistry in 1972 at the University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Sciences and was appointed teaching assistant in biochemistry in 1973 at the Department of Biology and Ecology, Faculty of Sciences, University of Novi Sad. In 1976, she defended her Master Thesis in biochemistry entitled “Hemoglobin of the common pheasant” at the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Sciences. Her PhD thesis entitled “Biochemical survey of cryoprotectant systems in the insect – *Ostrinia nubilalis*” was completed in 1984 at the University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Sciences. From 1977 until 1986 Professor Grubor-Lajšić worked at the Clinical Centre in Niš in the laboratory of nephrology as a biochemist, and in 1986 she specialized in clinical biochemistry at the Medical Faculty, University of Niš.

In 1986 she was appointed Assistant Professor of Biochemistry at the University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Sciences, Department of Biology and Ecology. In 1991 she was promoted to Associate Professor and in 1996 Full Professor of Biochemistry. Professor Grubor-Lajšić taught a fundamental course in Biochemistry and introduced new courses such as Mechanisms of Ecological Adaptations, Clinical Biochemistry, Biochemistry of Nutrition and many others at various levels of academic study. She was one of the leading Professors who participated in founding of Bachelor studies in Biochemistry in 2000 and Bachelor studies in Molecular Biology in 2003 at the Faculty of Sciences. Later, she promoted the establishment of a Chair of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Genetics in the Department of Biology and Ecology, Faculty of Sciences, but, unfortunately, she retired a few months before the Chair was established. Professor Grubor-Lajšić was an excellent educator, a strict Professor and mentor

who was highly respected by her students. Overall, Professor Grubor-Lajšić mentored more than 50 Bachelor student theses, 10 Masters theses and 9 PhD theses.

The main focus of Professor Grubor-Lajšić’s research was insect cold hardiness, especially in a species of moth, the European corn borer, *Ostrinia nubilalis*. Her pioneer work on cryoprotective mechanisms in overwintering caterpillars of *O. nubilalis* resulted in her PhD thesis under the supervision of Professor Vera Palanački. Later her research also focused on deciphering antioxidative mechanisms that govern insect diapause and cold hardiness. In addition to insect eco-physiology, Gordana also participated in a range of biomedical and veterinary research projects. Overall, she published more than 40 research articles in international journals, 12 articles in national journals, 3 book chapters in international monographs and 2 academic textbooks in the Serbian language. Professor Grubor-Lajšić participated in more than 10 national and international research projects and headed 4 projects.

In 1987, Gordana was a visiting Fulbright Scholar at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts, USA working with Professor John H. Nordin on the biochemistry of insect diapause and overwintering.

In 1989, as a holder of a prestigious Research Fellowship of the Royal Society, Professor Grubor-Lajšić spent a year at the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) in Cambridge, UK, undertaking collaborative research on insect cold hardiness with highly respected eco-physiologists, Dr. William Block, and Dr. Roger Worland. Gordana continued her productive research collaboration with BAS culminating in their participation on a joint European FP6 project on animal dormancies. This joint research on cold hardiness of arthropods was published in 11 original scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals as well as in a book chapter published by Springer-Verlag. Collaboration and great friendship with her British colleagues continued through Gordana’s retirement and sudden illness. As a Professor, mentor and colleague, Gordana has left an unforgettable mark on the Faculty of Sciences in Novi Sad and her research work in the UK and USA remains

highly regarded. She was an engaging, highly motivated and passionate scientist and at the same time a devoted educator. Her colleagues will always remember her as an honest and reliable friend, always eager to listen and to help. She is greatly missed by all who had the good fortune to know her.

Dr. Željko Popović

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