

## OBITUARY



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# Vladimir Simeon

## (1939 – 2017)

**P**ROFESSOR Vladimir Simeon, a distinguished Croatian chemist and scientist, *Professor emeritus* of the University of Zagreb, passed away on 13 January 2017, at the age of 77. By his death the Croatian science has lost a versatile chemist, one of the Croatian pioneers and top scientists in the field of modern chemical thermodynamics.

Vladimir Simeon was born in Zagreb, Croatia on 17 July 1939. He graduated from the Department for Chemical Technology, Faculty of Technology, University of Zagreb in 1962, and received MSc (1965) and PhD (1968) degrees in the field of chemistry from the Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb. He started his scientific career as assistant at the Institute of Physical Chemistry, Zagreb in 1963 to continue at the Institute for Medical Research and Occupational Health, Zagreb from 1964 to 1970 where he was appointed research associate in 1970, senior research associate in 1974, and senior scientist in 1980. He habilitated at the Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb in 1970. From 1987 until 2009 he was Professor of physical chemistry at the Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, where in 1996 he gained tenure as a professor. Between 1988 and 2007 he served as Head of the Division of Physical Chemistry, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science. He retired in 2009, to be awarded the honorary position of *Professor emeritus* of the University of Zagreb.

Professor Simeon's main fields of scientific interest were experimental chemical thermodynamics (calorimetry and potentiometry), chemistry of electrolyte solutions (equilibria, spectrometry), bioinorganic chemistry (stability constants, spectroscopy, molecular mechanics), chemometrics (factor and regression analyses), bibliometrics as well as chemical terminology and nomenclature. As principal investigator in charge of numerous scientific projects, both Croatian and international, he worked in collaboration



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with highly respectable scientific institutions such as US NIST and Texas A&M University. During his career he published more than 60 scientific papers and wrote an exceptionally valuable university textbook on thermodynamics (*Termodinamika*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1980). He also edited and co-authored the Croatian edition of Recommendations of the Commission on Nomenclature of Inorganic Chemistry of the International Union for Pure and Applied Chemistry (*Hrvatska nomenklatura anorganske kemije*, Croatian Chemical Society, Zagreb, 1996). This very

important nomenclature guide has been well accepted by the Croatian chemical community and the nomenclature has been established as professional standard in Croatia. Professor Simeon was also author of the chapter entitled *Equilibria in electrolyte solutions* in the scientific monograph *Interfacial Dynamics* (ed. N. Kallay, Marcel Dekker, New York, 1999) and contributed more than 3000 notes in the field of chemistry to a technical vocabulary (*Tehnički rječnik*, ed. V. Dabac, 1969). His contributions to the nomenclature of inorganic compounds were complemented with those on recommendations regarding the symbols and unities of physical quantities of the Croatian Chemical Society and IUPAC. During his long and productive career Vladimir Simeon delivered a great number of lectures at scientific conferences and institutions.

Thanks to his comprehensive and up-to-date chemical knowledge, as well as to his methodical and meticulous approach professor Simeon's teaching, being by no means ordinary, was highly recognized. At the graduate studies at the Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb he taught courses in *Physical chemistry*, *Chemical thermodynamics*, *Thermodynamics of irreversible processes* and *Electrochemistry*. It was thanks to him that a *Computer laboratory* course was introduced in the study programme. At the same faculty he held PhD courses in *Ion association in electrolyte solutions*, *Chemical thermodynamics*, *Statistical thermodynamics and irreversible processes*, *Experiment planning and data analysis* and *Chemometrics*. In addition, at the Faculty of Pedagogy, University of Rijeka he taught a course *Physical chemistry*. He acted as supervisor to a great number of diploma, MSc and PhD students.

Professor Simeon was not only a successful scientist and teacher, but he also took an active part in many other activities related to chemistry and science in general. For many years he was a member of the Croatian Chemical Society Managing Board, and president of the Society from 2006 to 2008. For more than 40 years he was a member of the Editorial Board of the journal *Croatica Chemica Acta*,

acting as Technical Editor and as Editor-in-Chief from 1985 to 1995. He was also Croatian National Representative of the IUPAC Commission on Nomenclature of Inorganic Chemistry (1982–1988), Head of the Doctoral Studies in Chemistry at the Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb (1987–1998), member (1995–2005) and president (1999–2005) of the Scientific Field Committee for the field of chemistry, and member of the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports Council for Natural Sciences. In all of the above mentioned areas Vladimir Simeon has left a truly remarkable impact. He received the Josip Juraj Strossmayer Award in 1996 and the National Science Award of the Republic of Croatia in 2005, and was awarded the Medal of the Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb in 2009.

It can be rightly said that Professor Vladimir Simeon belongs among those few scientists who deserve the title of a renaissance man. His exceptionally thorough and broad knowledge covered not only the fields of chemistry and natural sciences but also those of humanities and in particular of linguistics. His scientific and professional work was highly regarded in Croatia, but also internationally. He was endowed with the qualities of excellent teacher and supervisor. Professionally very serious, on less formal occasions he was a most interesting and entertaining person to talk to, with a specific and strong sense of humour. All of us who knew him have benefited from his work, dedication and wisdom. His students have formed a Facebook group and honoured him with the title of “the magician of thermodynamics”. What better proof is there to show admiration and respect for their teacher?

On behalf of all those who knew him, his students, co-workers and colleagues, it is with great honour that I express gratitude to professor Simeon for all his work and for all we have received from him. We shall always miss and remember him.

Vladislav Tomišić