

In memoriam

Prof. Dr. Branimir Petković
(1942-2017)



Professor Branimir Petković was born on 12 September 1942 in the village of Blato (municipality of Pirot), where he received his primary education. He graduated from the Secondary Teachers' School in the town of Aleksinac in 1963. For one year he worked as a teacher in Ražanj, and after that he went into the military service.

In 1965 he enrolled at the Faculty of Science and Mathematics and graduated with a major in botany in 1969. His first subsequent employment was at the Loznica Secondary School, where he taught from 1969 to 1972. On 1st July 1972 he was hired as an assistant at the Chair of Botany of the Faculty of Science and Mathematics. Soon afterwards, he started to investigate the flora and vegetation of Serbia. Later he began to carry out field work for his doctoral thesis. In 1982 he submitted his completed doctoral thesis, which was entitled: "Meadow Vegetation of the Tutin Region". In 1983, after successfully defending his doctoral dissertation, he was appointed to the position of Assistant Professor of Plant Morphology. The lectures he delivered were carefully prepared and presented in a dynamic and interesting way.

He attained the rank of Associate Professor in 1989. After the retirement of his professor (B. Tatić), he start-

ed teaching the course General Botany for Students of Molecular Biology and Physiology. This complex subject was presented in an understandable and adequate way. He also headed the module "Systematics and Phylogeny of Plants and Fungi" at both the undergraduate and post-graduate levels, and taught several elective courses within it. He was elected a full professor in 1996.

Professor Petković was dedicated to pedagogical work with students and younger associates. He is the co-author of several textbooks, which were very well accepted by students.

He spent time at several different botanical institutes, in Ljubljana (1974), Skopje (1976), and Vienna (1990).

For a number of years, he investigated the flora and vegetation of the Tutin region, where he began the field research for his doctoral dissertation. During the early period of his career, his main scientific interest was in research on plant communities. He was especially interested in relict and endemic phytocoenoses, as well as those on serpentine soil. He was also very enthusiastic about phytocoenological investigations, his PhD thesis having partly dealt with this field. He described and analysed several plant communities (*Matteucio-Al-*

netum glutinosae, *Musco-Seslerio-Edraiantetum jugoslavici*, *Lathyreto-Molinietum coeruleae*, *Aceri-Ostryetum carpiniifoliae*, *Festuco rubrae-Cynosuretum cristati*, *Carici-Nardetum strictae*, *Seslerio-Ramondaetum serbicae*, *Edraiantho-Seslerio-Ramondaetum serbicae*, etc.).

The scientific opus of Professor Petković included more than 150 bibliographic units. He was author or co-author of seven articles in international journals, 41 papers in national scientific journals, and several chapters in monographs. Also, he participated in numerous international and national scientific meetings. Some results were published in extensor (23) and as abstracts (72).

Professor Petković carried out research in classical phytocoenology, anatomy, taxonomy, vegetation mapping, phytogeography, and environmental protection.

In collaboration with Professor Tatić, he participated in writing the edition *Flora of Serbia 2* (V. Stevanović, Ed.) with two chapters (the families Cannabaceae and Urticaceae). He also took part in writing several chapters in *The Red Data Book of the Flora of Serbia* (V. Stevanović, Ed.) as the author or co-author of its analysis of the following endangered species: *Arabis bryoides*, *Centranthus junceus*, *Herminium monorchis*, *Ophrys lutea* ssp. *minor*, *O. holosericea*, and *Orchis spitzelii*. In addition to this, he participated in compilation of a monograph entitled “Nutlets and Trichomes in the Lamiaceae Family” (P.D. Marin, Ed.).

Floristic research and taxonomy were the fields of his research that gave the most fruitful results. He recorded some species new to the flora of Serbia and even a whole genus new to it – *Centranthus*, with the species *C. longiflorus* (Valerianaceae). In addition to this, he published reports of new findings in Serbia of a number of other interesting species as well (*Dictamnus albus*, *Drosera rotundifolia*, *Edraianthus* spp., *Goodyera repens*, *Ramonda serbica*, *Selaginella helvetica*, and *S. selaginoides*). Together with his colleagues, he also recorded several species new to the bryophyte flora of Yugoslavia.

Professor Petković investigated the influence of geological substrata on morphological and anatomical characteristics of some plants in Serbia. In a number of instances, he organised anatomical and histological investigations of selected plant species (lycophytes, conifers, flowering plants, etc.).

As a mentor, he organised morphometric investigations of *Cedrus atlantica* needles in the industrial environment of Pančevo. Moreover, investigations of the influence of pollution in the Pančevo region causing damage to the needles of *Picea omorika* were also carried out under his guidance, with very interesting and applicable results. Among other professional activities, he was involved in the mentorship of a doctoral thesis that presented an anatomical analysis of the vascular system of sunflower. His contribution to numerous graduate, master, and doctoral theses was invaluable.

He collaborated with colleagues from the Faculty of Science of the University of Kragujevac. With colleagues from that faculty, he carried out karyological analysis of *Rumex acetosella*, morphological investigation of *Verbascum phoeniceum*, etc.

Anatomical and morphological investigations of selected species (*Bornmuellera dieckii*, *Hypericum calycinum*, *Pinus heldreichii*, *P. peuce*, *Polygonatum latifolium*, *Polypodium vulgare*, *Ptilostemon strictus*, *Stachys germanica*) were also carried out at the Institute of Botany and “Jevremovac” Botanical Garden in Belgrade. As a result, several papers were published in national journals.

He worked on several groups of plants from the micromorphological point of view. He and his collaborators investigated nutlet ornamentation in selected *Salvia* species, *Teucrium* spp., *Stachys germanica* (Lamiaceae), and *Vicia* spp. (Fabaceae).

Professor Petković was active in various scientific associations, such as the Serbian Biological Society, the Society of Systematists of Yugoslavia, and the Society of Ecologists of Yugoslavia. He was also a member of some international associations (OPTIMA, etc.).

He participated in a number of national scientific projects supported by the Institute of Botany and Botanical Garden “Jevremovac” of the Faculty of Biology and financed by Ministry of Science and Technological Development. He also participated in the national projects “The Red Data Book of the Flora of Serbia” and “Flora and Vegetation of Serbia”. He was the leader of the international project “Comparative Chorological and Biosystematic Studies on the Serpentine Floras of Serbia and Bulgaria”.

Several students completed their PhD degrees under his guidance. His collaborators are spread through many institutions, not only in Serbia, but also in some other countries.

It should be mentioned that he had great enthusiasm and talent for teaching. Many generations of students will remember his illustrative lectures.

Over the course of his long career, Professor Petković significantly influenced many collaborators and scientists working in several fields of botany, including phytocoenology, comparative morphology, anatomy, and systematics. He headed the Chair of Plant Morphology and Systematics until his retirement.

Professor Petković passed away on 26 November 2017 in Belgrade, thus bringing to an end the impressive personality and career of a noted teacher and scientist. He will long be remembered for his outstanding achievements in Serbian botany.

Petar D. MARIN and Sonja Duletić - LAUŠEVIĆ