



Celebrating the 70th anniversary of Professor Jože Škerjanc

Professor Škerjanc graduated from the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Technology, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology, University of Ljubljana in 1958. It was one year later that he obtained position of an assistant at the Chair of Physical Chemistry and after completing his doctoral studies in the field of physical chemistry of polyelectrolyte solutions in 1965, he was promoted to Doctor of Chemical Sciences. He spent the following academic year (1966–67) with Prof. U. P. Strauss at Rutgers University, N. J., USA, doing his post-doctoral studies. After coming back he continued his academic career and advanced to assistant professor in 1972, to become associate professor in 1978. In 1983 he was promoted to the title of Full Professor in Physical Chemistry. From 1972 on he was a lecturer of physical chemistry to undergraduate chemical technology and chemical engineering students. From 1989 until his retirement he was teaching physical chemistry to undergraduates of chemistry studies. In addition to that he was also engaged in teaching technical thermodynamics, surfactant and colloidal chemistry to undergraduate students. Until recently he has been teaching chemical thermodynamics at the post-graduate programme.

Numerous generations of chemists, chemical engineers and technologists will remember him as an outstanding teacher and mentor. He managed to combine educational and research work and made a successful career both, as a teacher and research worker. By educating a large number of scientists and professionals he has greatly contributed to the formation of generations of chemists, chemistry engineers and technologists who are now hold-

ing leading positions at the university, research institutions and industries.

His research focus was mainly in the field of physical chemistry of electrolyte solutions, polyelectrolytes, surfactants and fullerenes, both in experimental and theoretical research, which is nowadays a rare case. He was mainly interested in studying thermodynamic and transport properties of polyelectrolyte solutions, particularly enthalpies of dilution, osmotic coefficients and transport numbers. He designed and constructed his own calorimeter to become the first one to measure the enthalpies of dilution of polyelectrolyte solutions with mono-valent and poly-valent counter-ions. He was also the first one to describe these using electrostatic theory of polyelectrolyte solutions, based on a cell model. Just a few years before his retirement he published a number of echoing articles on the interaction between cationic surfactants with alkyl chains of different length and counter-charged polyions.

After his retirement he continued his research work: he has been actively participating in projects of the Chair of Physical Chemistry, focusing on studies of thermodynamic properties of fullerene solutions with substituted ionic groups.

In recognition of his high-quality research, Professor Škerjanc was awarded the Boris Kidrič Fund Prize twice: in 1968 and 1976, and in 1992 received the Award of the Republic of Slovenia for his scientific research work.

Professor Škerjanc held numerous important positions at the University and extramurally: For two office periods he held the position of the Head of Department of Che-

mistry and Chemical Technology to become elected as the first Dean of the Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Technology in 1995–97. It was due to his hard work and persistence that the formation of a new faculty went smoothly after the previous faculty had been reformed and that a new biochemistry study programme was introduced. In running the Department he always insisted on ethic principles, making sure that academic promotion criteria of the University senate were strictly respected in promoting academic staff. He can be undoubtedly merited for the success of the Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Technology, University of Ljubljana who has now become comparable with other renowned universities worldwide. In recognition of his exceptional achievements in teach-

ing, research, mentorship and organizational work, by which he greatly contributed to the promotion of chemistry sciences and the University itself, he was awarded the Golden Plaque of the University of Ljubljana in 1999. In 2000 Professor Škerjanc was awarded the title of Professor Emeritus.

Celebrating the 70th anniversary of our dear colleague, teacher and mentor, his associates and friends wish him all the best in the years to come. We hope that he will continue in this vein and remain in good health, coming to our Chair to share his professional knowledge and wisdom in solving our scientific and pedagogical problems.

Gorazd Vesnaver
