



## EDITORIAL

This issue is an In Memoriam issue dedicated to Professor Peter Pfenndt, who passed away on January 14, 2021. Professor Pfenndt is considered the founder of the scientific discipline of Environmental Chemistry in Serbia.

In the late 1980s, studying the humic substances of recent sediments, he entered the field of environment. In the years that followed, he devoted almost all his research to this field, which is today considered one of the most important in the natural sciences. For decades, he was one of the most active members of the Serbian Chemical Society and founder of the Section for Environmental Chemistry.

It was a great honor for us to organize the collection and evaluation of scientific papers from various fields of environmental chemistry. We would like to express our gratitude to the authors, and to the editors of the *Journal* for their understanding and help. They enabled us to prepare this special issue, which will bring back memories of the Professor in the future. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Gorica Veselinović for her selfless help in the technical part of the preparation of this issue.

Belgrade, January 11, 2022

Guest Editors,  
Branimir Jovančičević, PhD, Full Professor  
Vladimir Beškoski, PhD, Associate Professor

## Petar Pfindt (1934–2021)

Petar Pfindt, a longtime professor at the Faculty of Chemistry, outstanding expert in the field of environmental chemistry and founder of the said scientific discipline in Serbia, passed away in January 2021.

Petar Pfindt was born in November 1934 in the village of Jaša Tomić, district of Zrenjanin, to his mother Marija, née Prokle, housewife, and father Anton, glass cutter and trader.

The Second World War saw him in Jaša Tomić where he was together with his parents. He finished elementary school in Hungarian and Romanian in Romania, followed by a year at the Teacher-training College in Timisoara and the Serbian Gymnasium in Vršac, where he graduated in 1955.

In 1955, he enrolled in the Chemistry Department, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Belgrade. During his studies in the period 1957–1960 he was engaged as a laboratory assistant and demonstrator at the Institute of Chemistry's analytical laboratory, while simultaneously being an active member of the Student Union: for three years he was a member of the Student Union Board within the Chemistry Division, member of the Founding Board of the "Sima Lozanić" Professional Club of Chemistry Students, Vice-President of its first Management Board and its longtime Chairman. He served in the army from September 1961 to February 1963 and graduated in March 1964 with an average grade of 9.00.

He was appointed Assistant at the Department of Applied Chemistry in October 1964. In 1971 he finished his graduate studies after completing his Master's thesis entitled "Determination of unsaturation of Aleksinac oil shale kerogen by modified methods for iodine number". He received his PhD degree in 1975 after defending his thesis entitled "A study of the Chemical Nature of Kerogens by Bromination".

In 1975, he was appointed Assistant Professor for the course Chemical Technology at the Department of Applied Chemistry. He was re-appointed twice,



in 1983 and 1991, for the courses Industrial Chemistry and Environmental Chemistry. In 1992 he was appointed Associate Professor, followed by tenureship as Full Professor in 1997.

While initially in the capacity of an assistant and then as a full professor as well, he improved teaching of the courses on which he was engaged in terms of both holding exercises and lectures. He drafted new curriculums for courses taught in undergraduate and graduate studies and introduced several courses in the field of biochemistry and applied chemistry.

During his first years as an assistant (1964–65) he expanded exercises held in Chemical Technology by introducing a number of latest, state-of-the-art and problem-solving exercises for students while devising tailor-made instructions for exercises.

On the occasion of Students' Day (April, 4), he was recognized as one of the best assistants at the University of Belgrade and awarded a diploma and a badge by the University Board of the Student Union (1972/73).

In addition to teaching undergraduate studies (Industrial Chemistry and Environmental Chemistry), as of 1979 he taught the elective courses Environmental Chemistry and Chemistry of Water Technology, as well as a part of the course Selected Processes of Chemical Industry. He devised pertinent curriculums and unauthorized course readers for these courses.

He taught the courses Basics of Chemical Technology and Chemical Technology in the period 1980–1987, followed by Industrial Chemistry with Environmental Chemistry as of 1989.

In addition to working at the Faculty of Chemistry in Belgrade, he taught in Priština, Kragujevac, Niš, Center for Multidisciplinary studies in Belgrade, Faculty of Physical Sciences and Faculty of Geography in Belgrade.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, he instituted the courses Environmental Chemistry (1978) and Chemistry of Water and Wastewater (1982) at the Faculty, while initiating research in the said fields. At his initiative, the Environmental Chemistry division was established in post-graduate studies in 1987, whereas Environmental Chemistry was introduced as a course for all fourth year students at the Faculty (1990). In 1993, he initiated establishment of the Environmental Chemistry Section with the Department of Applied Chemistry in the fourth year of undergraduate studies, which included the following courses: Pollutant Hemodynamics, Chemistry of Water and Wastewater, Instrumental Analysis 2 and Environmental Chemistry 2.

He is the author of the textbook entitled "Environmental Chemistry" (2009) and co-author of "The Practicum and Workbook for Industrial Chemistry" (2021). He wrote course readers for Environmental Chemistry, Water Chemistry and Technology, and Selected Processes of Chemical Industry. He is the author of instructions for student exercises for multiple courses and co-author of three secondary school textbooks in Applied Chemistry.

He was engaged in scientific research in the field of Organic Geochemistry and Environmental Chemistry. With regards to Organic Geochemistry he undertook research on structures of organic substances of old sediments, primarily of bituminous shale kerogens. His Master's and Doctoral theses both pertain to this scientific field. In addition to chemistry of kerogens, he studied humic acids and local peats. Regarding organic and geochemistry studies, he was dedicated to researching reactivity of inorganic constituents of organic substances, primarily pyrites. Prof. Petar Pfenđt published more than 40 scientific papers. He mentored more than 65 diploma theses, eight specialist theses, 14 Master's theses and four doctoral theses.

In the position of Deputy Chairman or Chairman of the Organizing Committee, he organized three large symposiums (amongst which one was international) dedicated to environmental chemistry.

He was a peer reviewer of papers published in *Organic Geochemistry* and *The Journal of the Serbian Chemical Society*. He was a contributor to the Encyclopedia and worked on entries until the end of his life.

As of 1973, he participated in organizing Federal and International competitions for chemistry students. On several occasions he led the summer school for young researchers in the Petnica Research Center.

He went on several study visits abroad. In 1966 he attended the "Borderline Fields of Chemistry" summer school at BASF (Ludwigshafen, FR Germany). He went on two short visits to the Department of Development of Wastewater Treatment Procedures in 1982 and 1983 at Linde Ag in Munich (1978 and 1979). Later on, in 1991, he proceeded with professional training at KF Jülich (Institute of Applied Physical Chemistry – Laboratory for Studying Pollutant Hemodynamics), Henkel AG (Institute of Ecotoxicology – Biochemodynamics of Surfactants) in Dusseldorf and at BASF's Laboratory for Studying Wastewater Treatment Procedures, Ludwigshafen.

He held several positions at the Faculty, amongst which some were highest-ranking managerial functions: Deputy Head of the Institute of Chemistry (1976–1978), Head of the Institute of Chemistry (1978–1980), Head of the Department of Applied Chemistry (1988–1997), Dean of the Faculty of Chemistry (1998–2001).

He headed the Faculty in extremely difficult and sensitive times (1998–2001). When the University was deprived of its autonomy, and freedom was taken away from professors, he acted wisely and bravely while protecting the professors and the entire staff from inadequate laws and the authorities disinclined towards the Faculty and its tradition. Despite the new rules of conduct and the hitherto unheard of authorizations bequest to Faculty Deans, Pfenđt respected the tradition of academic conduct in all his acts while making decisions in agreement with Heads of Departments and while respecting the will of the Teaching-Scientific Council.

After meeting the requirements for retirement in 1999, his employment was extended until 2003. Even after he had retired, Petar Pfenđt came to the Faculty every day to pursue his scientific research until late 2020.

He was fluent in German and English and had a working knowledge of French, Russian, Hungarian and Romanian.

He was married to Lidiĵa Pfenđt, née Sumilin, Full Professor at the Faculty of Chemistry, with whom he has two sons, Eduard and Robert.

Petar Pfenđt, who dedicated his entire working life to teaching and science, or that is to say to the Faculty of Chemistry and his Department, will be remembered by the professors of the Faculty of Chemistry and many a generation of students as an outstanding scholar, teacher and expert, while at the same time being a quiet and modest, unobtrusive, correct and tolerant person, ready to help and listen. On the other hand, he was creative and active in his endeavors to contribute to modernization and expansion of his Department and the entire Faculty while instituting new courses and initiating establishment of new scientific disciplines.

Sneĵana Boĵović, PhD, Full Professor