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IN MEMORIAM

Professor Bojana Grujić-Injac (1925–2017)

Professor (retired) Bojana Grujić-Injac, who elevated both the research and teaching of Chemistry of Natural Products and Biochemistry at the Faculty of Chemistry, University of Belgrade, died on March 18, at the age of 92 after a short illness.

Bojana Grujić was born in Bašaid (Vojvodina, Serbia) on January 8, 1925. She spent her school years in Kikinda and in Vršac, after which she studied chemistry at the Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, University of Belgrade, where she obtained her diploma in 1950, followed by a doctorate in 1955 with Professor Djordje Stefanović, who introduced her into the field of natural products chemistry.

After graduation, Bojana Grujić was appointed by the Ministry of Education as an assistant for Chemistry at the Faculty of Veterinarian Medicine in Belgrade, but after three years she returned to the Department of Chemistry and remained there (with short temporary stay at Department of Chemistry in Priština, 1964–1967) until her retirement in 1983. She was appointed Assistant Professor in 1956, Associate Professor in 1967, and Full Professor in 1971.

The research interests of Professor Bojana Grujić-Injac in natural products chemistry comprised study of structure and biological activity of phospholipids, pheromones, terpenoids, alkaloids and plant pigments. By mid-1960 she also entered into the field of proteins, working on the isolation and basic characterization of a number of plant proteins and particularly on amino acid sequence determination of some haemoglobins. That work was done in close cooperation with the laboratory of Professor Gerhard Braunitzer at the Max-Planck Institute for Biochemistry in Munich of which she became (1972) an external co-worker. The research on proteins in general and on haemoglobin in particular that she initiated nearly 50 years ago did not cease; on the contrary, it extended and is progressing constantly in the Department.

Professor Bojana Grujić-Injac mentored 30 doctorates, co-authored 70 papers and delivered several plenary lectures at scientific meetings.



Professor Bojana Grujić-Injac made also great contributions to the teaching at the Department. She taught Chemistry of Natural Products and introduced (1969) and taught the undergraduate course of General Biochemistry. She co-authored textbooks of the chemistry of natural products and wrote textbooks of biochemistry. As a head of the Chair (“Katedra”) for Chemistry of natural products (later Biochemistry) which she held from 1974 until 1983, she supported younger colleagues to develop a number of specialized biochemical courses. When opportunity arose in 1981 Professor Bojana Grujić-Injac initiated and took an active role in the formation of a distinct Biochemistry group at the Department. Finally, it should be emphasized that research and teaching of biochemical disciplines within a chemical curriculum at our Department was much ahead of the time, since this was not a common practice at chemistry departments worldwide until many years later.

In parallel with her scientific and pedagogical work at the Department, Professor Bojana Grujić-Injac was engaged in numerous administrative services to the Department, University, and Ministry of Education. Thanks to her, the Department obtained earmarked equipment needed for modern biochemical research. Through all her professional years Professor Bojana Grujić-Injac was engaged in activities of the Serbian Chemical Society, particularly in its Biochemistry section. She was elected for the merit member of the Society (1982). She received a number of awards for her work, including the highest state medals.

Finally, it is to be noted with great regret and sadness that Professor Bojana Grujić-Injac was the last of our prominent Professors coming from the first post-Second World War generation of chemistry students, which greatly contributed to the development and expansion of this Department.

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