

Professor RNDr. Pavel Hrnčiar, DrSc. Sixty Years Old



At the beginning of this year (16th January, 1990) the friends and acquaintance reminded Professor RNDr. Pavel Hrnčiar, DrSc. his important life jubilee. He himself would be likely to forget this outstanding anniversary — for he is too enthusiastic for work. With youthful ardour he is solving interesting problems in organic chemistry of the carbonyl compounds and makes effort, with more or less success, to transfer his knowledge and élan to the young generation of chemists with whom he is in contact in the course of teaching.

Professor Hrnčiar was born in Tomášovce where he attended the primary school. He completed the secondary school education in Zvolen and Lučenec and obtained the General Certificate of Education in 1949. Then he studied chemistry at the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the Comenius University in Bratislava from where he graduated in 1953. As early as during his study he worked at the Faculty as a part-time assistant and having finished the study, he joined the staff of the University as a teacher. In addition to his duties as a demonstrator, he had to at once take on lecturing on some subjects. He was very busy not only with educational but also with organizational activity because chemistry was being intensively developed at the Faculty at that time. In spite of this fact — and it illustrates the qualities of Professor Hrnčiar — the degree of the Candidate of Sciences was conferred upon him in 1961 and in 1963 he habilitated as an Associate Professor in organic chemistry. In 1975 he received the DrSc. degree followed by the appointment to a professorship of organic chemistry in 1980.

On the basis of these facts, it might seem that our celebrator was not interested in anything but chemistry. However, it is not so, indeed. As early as an undergraduate he took part in a long-termed voluntary work at youth constructions. Then he was actively engaged in various social organizations where he held high positions at the Faculty or the University levels. We must highly appreciate his organizational activity in the Slovak Chemical Society of the Slovak Academy of Sciences where he has been working for many years as a head of the organic chemistry division as well as a member of the Editorial Board of the journal *Chemical Papers*. In this way, Professor Hrnčiar systematically participates in improvement of standards of both the education of organic chemists and the organic chemistry as such in Slovakia. Moreover, he always spares enough time for his family, for the literature as a hobby and in his young days also for an active sport.

Our celebrator's professional devotion to the chemistry of carbonyl compounds has been his life-long fondness. However, it does not mean at all that it is something preserved and unchangeable. On the contrary, this sympathy has been nicely developing.

At the beginning, it was liking for 1,3-indanediones and later it expanded over a wide range of cyclic 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds. Some years later, his interest spirally returned to 1,3-indanediones, but at a higher level — to the photochemistry of these substances. At present, Professor Hrnčiar is not satisfied with just a single type of carbonyl compounds. He started to explore possibilities of the preparation of iron tricarbonyl complexes from some cyclic 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds. In each of the above fields, Professor Hrnčiar and his coworkers achieved significant results which met with the high international appraisal. It would be difficult, however, to choose a few examples because Professor Hrnčiar is the author or coauthor of 180 original scientific communications.

Professor Hrnčiar is an illustrious personality in the students' community. He is well-known among them not only because of the high standard of his lecture-courses and the exactingness at exams, but also as a teacher who has always been concerned about textbooks and lecture-notes availability for them. He wrote 10 lecture-notes and a textbook of organic chemistry which met with very favourable reception in the whole CSSR, and for which he was awarded the Prize of Ministry of Education of SSR. The students as well as chemists in the industry and research enjoy using the third revised edition of this book.

The organic chemists from the whole CSSR know the celebrator as a nice and friendly man who is always willing to share his knowledge with the others and to help. We, his coworkers at the department, know that chemistry is the major subject of his interest. However, he has also a wide scope of knowledge in other fields of science, including philosophy and social sciences. He is an individuality in the truest sense of the word.

Professor Hrnčiar's scientific achievements have been acknowledged several times. The highest honours of scientific institutions have been bestowed on him: The Hanuš Medal of the Czechoslovak Chemical Society of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, The Golden Medal of the Slovak Chemical Society of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, The Golden Medal of the Comenius University and The Golden Medal of the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the Comenius University. He is Merited Member of the Slovak Chemical Society of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. However, I think that his heart will be especially delighted by scientific communications dedicated to him by his friends and former students in this issue of *Chemical Papers*. This is the way how they want to pay tribute to their former mentor, to thank him for his contribution to their enrichment and to wish him good health, enthusiasm and élan in work for the future. As a representative of the whole team of his department, I am adding my voice to this wish.

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