

80th birthday of Professor Stanislav Škramovský



Professor PhMr. RNDr. *Stanislav Škramovský*, DrSc., will be eighty on November 24th, 1981. This is an occasion to look back at his exceptional career and appreciate at least a few from his many achievements. He is one of our pioneer chemists who contributed to the development of inorganic, toxicological, and pharmaceutical chemistry in our country. An inspired and excellent teacher, he supported introduction of modern methods of education in chemistry.

Stanislav Škramovský was born in Kolín. In 1921 he entered the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the Charles University in Prague where he received his Master's degree in pharmacology; afterwards he took special courses in inorganic chemistry. In 1924 he was appointed Assistant Professor at the Institute of Pharmaceutical and Applied Chemistry at the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the Charles University in Prague. There, in 1929, he received the degree of Doctor of Natural Sciences for his dissertation research on complexes of scandium. For his investigation of thermal decomposition of bismuth he devised in 1932 one of the first thermogravimetric apparatuses, original in its construction, the so-called stathmograph which recorded photographically the dependence of mass of the substance under decomposition on temperature and time. In 1936, with regard to his works on bismuth complexes, he was appointed Associate Professor of inorganic chemistry at the Charles University.

During World War II S. Škramovský was head of the chemical laboratory at the clinical hospital in Prague. His experiences in the field of medical chemistry were fully used after he was appointed Professor at the Medical Faculty of the Charles University in Hradec Králové in 1946. There he built up the Institute of Medical Chemistry and worked in the field of industrial and social medicine.

In 1950 Professor Škramovský was appointed director of the Institute of Inorganic and Forensic Chemistry which was later reorganized and rebuilt under the name of Department of Inorganic Chemistry at the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the Charles University. He held this position until his retirement in 1970. In his scientific investigations performed together with his pupils he concentrated, among others, on coordination compounds, on research into inorganic systems by stathmographic and other thermal methods, and on study of parachor of inorganic substances. In estimation of his scientific achievements Professor Škramovský received the degree of Doctor of Chemical Sciences in 1956.

The scientific activities of Professor Škramovský are most closely related with his teaching. His students respected him, the professional level of his lectures was always high and the presentation of the topics vivid and interesting. Since in the opinion of Professor Škramovský

the success of chemistry courses at the university depends greatly on the quality of the courses the students got at secondary schools, he devoted a great deal of his efforts to modernization of secondary chemical education.

As a teacher he recognized the importance of chemical nomenclature. In 1940—1941 he participated in setting the first rules of Czech nomenclature for coordination compounds and from 1957—1963 under his leadership the revised rules for Czech nomenclature of inorganic compounds were elaborated.

Thanks to the initiative and unflinching efforts of Professor Škramovský several national conferences on inorganic and coordination chemistry were held (Smolenice 1955, Prague 1956, Liblice 1957, Brno 1958, Bratislava 1959, Prague 1960, etc.). At these meetings ideas were exchanged, problems, scientific and others, arisen in various research institutions were discussed, and above all, our chemical community could be informed about newest developments in the contemporary inorganic chemistry. All this helped to establish the main trends of investigation in the field of inorganic chemistry in our country.

In spite of his many duties and involvements Professor Škramovský never missed an opportunity for fostering the cooperation between the Czech and Slovak scientists. As a wise advisor he has always been a welcome guest at the Slovak chemical institutions.

Professor Škramovský's professional activities have been characterized by remarkable energy and versatility: he has been an excellent scientist, an inspiring teacher and a man active in many public service enterprises. He was founder and long-time chairman of the Division of Inorganic Chemistry and of the Division of Chemical Education of the Czechoslovak Chemical Society. He was able to use his wide knowledge and great experiences in pharmaceutical and medical chemistry and industrial toxicology as editor of the journal *Československá farmacie* (Czechoslovak pharmacology) from 1929—1949, as vice-chairman of the Division of Toxicological Chemistry of the Czechoslovak Chemical Society, as chairman for long years of the Pharmaceutical Section of the Czechoslovak Medical Society of J. E. Purkyně, and as a head of the Chemical Section of the Czechoslovak Pharmacopoeial Commission.

For his accomplishments he was awarded, among others, the Golden Medal of the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the Charles University, the Medal of Professor Hanuš of the Czechoslovak Chemical Society, the Honorary Membership of the Czechoslovak Chemical Society and Czechoslovak Medical Society of J. E. Purkyně.

This short portrait of Professor Škramovský, a scientist, teacher and administrator would remain a mere torso if we did not mention his personal traits. A modest, kind-hearted and optimistic man with a paternal attitude towards his coworkers and pupils, he has been interested both in the professional development and personal destiny of his coworkers. Though considerate and benevolent, he has tolerated no compromise in scientific work. His work and his personality influenced formation of a new generation of scientists and teachers of chemistry. We look at the whole work of Professor Škramovský, his contribution to the development of science with feelings of admiration and gratitude.

The Slovak inorganic chemists join all those who, upon this special occasion, will wish him the best of health. May he find satisfaction and joy in his future work.

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