

## “LIFE IS A GREAT ILLUSION, ACHIEVEMENTS STAY FOREVER!” MOMIR H. POLENAKOVIC (1939–2021)

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**Goce Spasovski**

Department of Nephrology, Medical Faculty, University St. Cyril and Mehtodius, Skopje, N Macedonia

**Corresponding author:** Prof. Goce Spasovski University Department of Nephrology, Medical Faculty, University of Skopje, R. N. Macedonia, Vodnjanska 17, 1000 Skopje; tel.: +389 (0)2 070 26 82 32; fax: +389 (0)2 3 17 81 02; e-mail: spasovski.goce@gmail.com



The nephrology community has lost one of its pioneers, Professor Momir Polenakovic, MD. Prof. Polenakovic passed away at the University Hospital in Skopje, North Macedonia at the age of 82. Prof. Momir Polenakovic was born on April 26th, 1939, in Skopje and died on March 6, 2021 after having acutely suffered from severe COVID bronchopneumonia. The nephrological community expresses its deepest sympathy to his wife Biljana and his sons Radmil and Hari. His colleagues, students, peers, and patients will miss a dedicated physician and thorough clinical scientist with wide recognition in the area of clinical and preventive nephrology, a teacher and a passionate writer about the national and regional history of nephrology.

Dr. Polenakovic graduated from the Medical Faculty of the Sts. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje and received an MD degree in 1963. His further studies at the Clinic of Internal Medicine and Nephrology in Skopje, as well as

at the Military Medical Academy in Belgrade, Serbia, Northwestern University in Chicago, and Harvard Medical School, Boston, USA, were dedicated to internal medicine with a focus on nephrology and nephroimmunopathology.

He defended his thesis: “Clinical and immunological evaluation of pathological events in renal glomeruli”, becoming an Assistant Professor at the Medical Faculty, University Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje in 1977.

He was elected as Vice Dean of the Medical Faculty, University Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje from 1982-1984. He also became an Associate Professor in 1983 and a Full Professor in 1988 of internal medicine at the Medical Faculty of the University Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje.

Prof. Polenakovic was the Head of the Department of Nephrology from 1990-1997, and in 1997 was elected as a member of the Macedo-

nian Academy of Sciences and Arts. He was also its Vice President during the term of 2004-2007.

From 2011-2017, Prof. Polenakovic was the Head of the Research Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology "Georgi Efremov" of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Since his retirement in 2005, he continuously worked in field of the medicine, publishing papers and contributing to the medical sciences as Macedonia's most fruitful medical scientist, with 228 Medline cited articles. His research interests encompassed glomerulonephropathies, tubulointerstitial diseases (especially Balkan endemic nephropathy), diabetic nephropathy, polycystic kidney disease, chronic renal failure, dialysis, and plasmapheresis.

He was a collaborator of many international trials, and, in fact, provided our country with the first opportunity to participate in the successfully conducted study on erythropoietin in the 1990s.

Prof. Polenakovic was the founder of the Macedonian Society of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs (MSND-TAO) in 1992, and also a co-founder of the Balkan Association of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs (BANTAO) in 1993 and its President from 1997-1999. He promoted the idea that the BANTAO association was the regional web that maintained its cohesion through cooperative science for the good of our patients, borderless and without political influence. Hence, he was the organizer of many

international congresses, and the European and International Nephrology Society supported many of his CME courses. His warm hospitality and splendid organizational skills were recognized and respected by scientists and friends alike from all over the world.

The international recognition of Prof. Polenakovic and his efforts to secure support for many young colleagues for their international education helped him to develop a team of collaborators who will continue his ideas and further advance the field of the nephrology in the region.

Finally, one of Prof. Polenakovic's greatest achievements was the promotion of the journal *Prilozi* to be accepted at the most visible medical database, Medline, and thus, papers with domestic authors can now be discovered online for international research. Prof. Polenakovic received many international awards and charters including the First ISN Pioneer Award for the Eastern and Central Europe Region.

We will certainly miss our leader, teacher, and shining example of an outstanding scientist and caring physician for many patients. Yet, we will also miss a friend, whose delicate and helpful words of wisdom were ready at each consultation. From a nephrology pioneer to a regional leader, Prof. Polenakovic was dedicated to the improvement of nephrology via mutual scientific collaboration across borders. He was a man with an open heart and unparalleled hospitality, whose goal it was to spread the spirit of free communication of science across borders.