

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

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In these hard and challenging times, when we are facing and struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic, to this invisible enemy we have lost one of the greatest teachers, pioneers, and founders of Macedonian medicine – academic professor Momir Polenakovic. The Society of Pathology would like to express its deepest condolences and sympathy to his closest family and relatives. We, as his colleagues and as his students, will feel his absence as a great void. Dr. Polenakovic has put forth incredible effort and has left an enormous legacy, not just in the field of nephrology and pathology, but in the whole public health system.

As one of the pioneers of Macedonian nephrology, academic professor Momir Polenakovic was aware of, and worked towards, a multidisciplinary approach in establishing diagnoses for patients with kidney diseases. His main focus was on the great importance of collaboration between the clinician and the pathologist. Since the 1970s

he selflessly focused on establishing cooperation amongst pathologists by organizing many conferences. Due to Dr. Polenakovic's steadfast collaboration with prof. Ljupco Grozdev, prof. Milan Jovanovski, and prof. Georgi Stavric, clinical nephrology in the Republic of Macedonia has been raised to a higher level, thereby becoming a regional leader in nephrology. The work of these illustrious experts and, of course, the desire to build strong bridges between their respective institutions, has provided us with the development of histological, immunofluorescent, and electron microscopical ultrastructure diagnostics for renal diseases. I must say that I have personally enjoyed discussing various topics with professor Polenakovic in his field. These discussions often resulted in publishing numerous scientific papers as well as organizing many international conferences and workshops.

From the 1990s until the present day, Dr. Polenakovic's rich international career

has aided in the education of numerous young colleagues in globally recognized institutions in the EU and the USA. I, personally, cannot express how great my gratitude is to prof. Polenakovic. Together, we, along with prof. Luan Truong from Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, USA, managed to successfully realize the project: “Cell apoptosis and proliferation in experimental chronic obstructive uropathy”. Prof. Polenakovic contributed to the education and dissemination of young scientists. Among his legacies is the example of the internationally recognized Prof. Kiril Trpkov, who is now employed at the University of Calgary, Department of Pathology. As a member of the MANU, Prof. Polenakovic was continuously working on promoting our medical society, focusing also on new projects.

As the head of the Research Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology “Georgi Efremov” of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts during the period of 2011 – 2017, with his team of dedicated physicians and investigators, Prof. Polenakovic executed numerous scientific projects.

We must, therefore, conclude that prof. Polenakovic has left a big mark on the field of medicine in Macedonia, but we must also not forget to work towards keeping his legacy alive for the new generations in our country. Moreover, we must not forget that even though he was an outstanding physician-expert, he was, above all, a good man and a friend with an immense propensity for communication and integration in the fields of health, education, and the scientific community, as a whole, in the Republic of Macedonia.