

AKADEMICIAN HRVOJE POŽAR (July 5th 1916. Knin – June 30th 1991. Zagreb)

Work was the basis of everything for academician Hrvoje Požar. He proved that fact his entire life. He cleared new paths for science with his immense knowledge and relentless work. For him, rest was an unknown category. Rest was a synonym for peace in which he could work and do research without being interrupted. His enthusiasm was infectious and his work pace extremely accelerated. That ensured that only the best were able to keep up, the ones ready for sacrifices but also for top-notch results. He was a born leader. He gathered ambitious young engineers around him and he selflessly relayed his knowledge and experience to others – students, assistants and collaborators. He showed by his example that hard work can result in new understandings. He aspired for greatness, setting for himself a difficult goal – achieving perfection, which he managed to do. That is why he never participated in useless confrontations with people of different opinions. He wasn't a media personality, aware of the power that politics has over knowledge, but he entrusted the results of his work to the people who were interested in it. That was Hrvoje Požar. He walked humbly among us but his greatness shines over Croatian science. And for that we thank him.

Born on July 5th, 1916 in Knin, in a family house on Knin's main street, opposite St. Anthony's Church where he was baptized on August 6th, 1916 as - Hrvoje, Paško, Šime. After elementary school, he attended high school in Zagreb, where he graduated in 1934. Growing up without a father, who was politically liquidated, he managed to transform the pride of the rocky Knin area into creative energy that has marked him from the earliest days to the end of his life. A scientist by commitment and results, humanist by conviction and action, wise, calm and generous, he remains the pride and joy of every citizen of Knin. At the Knin Fortress, which is the place that marked his childhood (along with the Krka riverside, the Museum and the convent), a memorial room of the Knin Museum is dedicated to him, as a modest gratitude and to make sure that the future generations will always be aware of the significance of one of the most important citizens of Knin.

The first decade of work experience of the academician Hrvoje Požar was largely related to his formal employment in former business organizations, which were the basis for the foundation of the current national electricity company, "Hrvatska Elektroprivreda" (HEP), where he organized (at the end of 1946) and subsequently led the first power dispatching organization unit in Dalmatia. During his entire career he participated in solving numerous complex research and analytical tasks and in creating concepts and determining the construction size of all power plants that were built up until 1990. He has pioneered the establishment and consistent application of technical and scientific methods in all segments of development, construction and use of power plants and electrical grid, integrated consideration of all energy systems, establishment of economic relations to the real costs and overall energy management for the purposes of Hrvatska Elektroprivreda, enhancing its operation. For five decades he was deeply in love with all forms of rational and economical use of energy for the needs of people and their environment. He was a great supporter of the maximum possible energy independence of any country, because without energy independence there is no political independence.

He began his work as a teaching assistant in 1951 and continues his career as a docent (1953), associate professor (1957), professor (1960-1985). He served as dean of Faculty of Electrical Engineering in Zagreb on two occasions (1960-1962 and 1968-1970). He introduced a new method of work, modernised classes, improved computerisation (acquiring the first computer), publishing on the Faculty, development of the Faculty's and University's Computing Centre, the Faculty and the University. He was beloved among his students for his enthusiasm, work ethic and devotion to work.

Known under the nickname Professor, he influenced many students, showing all of his human and professional broadness amongst them, also serving as a mentor to them. He partook in four important Faculty reforms through which the classes were equated with the best practices in Europe, along with the needs of knowledge, and supported the “year after year” regime of studying, in which it was required to pass all the exams in the current year to be able to go to the next one. That system lasted for almost 35 years and in that period the Faculty became known as the leading educational institution in the country.

He was vice-rector of the University of Zagreb in 1970/1971 and 1971/1972. During that time, seven new scientific communities were founded at the University of Zagreb. Along with rector Ivan Supek and vice-rector Nikša Allegretti he established the University Computing Centre which played an important role in University education of experts. He co-created many legal acts, giving his valuable contribution to the development of the University, starting with the program of perspective development of the University of Zagreb through the draft of the Law on scientific work to the Law on higher education adopted by the Parliament of the Socialistic Republic of Croatia in July 1971. His priority has always been the well-being of the students and he is remembered by his extraordinary sincerity and honesty during the political crisis that same year, when he was one of the few people to bravely testify to the benefit of the students that were on trial for starting the strike.

He was the editor-in-chief of the Encyclopaedia of Technology, published by the Miroslav Krleža Institute of Lexicography, from 1976 to 1991. By editing so far the most comprehensive Croatian encyclopaedic edition and one of the few similar editions in the world, he ranked among the leading figures of the national as well as world's lexicography. He collaborated with the Institute ever since 1960 and with the Encyclopaedia's editorial board since 1966, as the editor in the field of electrical engineering. After the retirement of the Encyclopaedia's initiator and first editor-in chief, professor Rikard Podhorsky, academician Požar assumed this responsible role (volumes 6 to 12). He edited the encyclopaedic entries to the last detail, leaving instructions written in his recognizably neat handwriting. Besides writing and editing encyclopaedic entries, his role comprised of the organisation of numerous collaborators. He always welcomed their opinions, encouraging them to review his texts as well. Being a man of broad education and an excellent engineer, by editing the Encyclopaedia, he made his mark on the systematisation of knowledge in the field of technology, as well as on the development of Croatian technological terminology.

Academician Požar was the Academy's secretary general for 13 years (from 1978 until 1991), the longest in the history of the Academy. His extraordinary skills and longtime persistent activity have left an indelible mark in all aspects of the Academy's operations. He has shown a great understanding and established close relationships with all of the members of the Academy, not just in the field in which he operated both expertly and scientifically, the technical sciences, but also in a wider circle, from linguistics to mathematics and physics. His effort and contribution in encouraging scientific research and in making the results of those researches public improved the Academy's publishing activities, to the point of one book a week. He had a crucial role in the transformation of the Academy from Yugoslavian Academy of Sciences and Arts to Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, showing that the Academy has always been Croatian, by membership, domain and results.

Throughout his scientific carrier, from 1950 to 1990, upon developing energy and electrical energy systems and building new plants, he subjected science to everyday needs. He was a predecessor of scientific analysis based on simultaneous observation of energy systems and energy forms. His creative and visionary work was the foundation for the “Zagreb Energy School”, a tradition of scientific research known worldwide. He insisted on basing all decisions on scientific analysis and he opened new scientific views with his knowledge. Tireless in his work, he was a role model for young engineers,

encouraging them to bravely interpret scientific results, showing an extraordinary strength for finding new solutions. Until this day, he is an unreachable scientific authority, and a person known for conveying his knowledge and love for science to others. The scientific community owes him for his books and for establishing a new way of thinking, understanding and his selfless work. He is the author of 319 professional and scientific papers, articles, reports and books, both in Croatia and abroad.

Engineer, doctor of technical sciences, university professor, worldwide known scientist, encyclopaedist and academician Hrvoje Požar is an unavoidable and pivotal figure in technical sciences in modern Croatian history. Born in Knin, his professional and scientific life was connected to Zagreb where he achieved all of his accomplishments, which have left the Croatian capital forever in debt to him. Thanks to his priceless work, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing in Zagreb is equal to the famous universities all over the world. He also participated in the operation of the Electrical Institute in Zagreb from which, with his contribution, the Energy Institute has developed, proudly carrying his name. He is the founder of the world-famous "Zagreb Energy School". His activity and superb scientific achievements have carried the name of Zagreb throughout the entire world. And Zagreb, where he found his final resting place in 1991, had thanked him with the Award of Zagreb given to him in 1966.