Seed Science Research (2007) **17**, 69–70 DOI: 10.1017/S0960258507383153

REMEMBRANCE

Radomir M. Konjević (1 August 1946–22 July 2006)

Professor Radomir Konjević

Professor Radomir Konjević passed away on 22 July 2006, on the eve of his 60th birthday. Even though we were aware that his health was seriously damaged, his staid attitude toward his illness and his unrestrained working enthusiasm until the very last day had left us unprepared; we encountered his leaving shocked and shaken. During the last working day of that week, he submitted a manuscript that he was working on to the editor, and reviewed his coworkers' scientific paper, which was being readied for publication. At the beginning of the next working week, he was not among us anymore.

Radomir Konjević – or Rade as we all called him – was born on 1 August 1946 in Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia. After finishing high school in 1965 at Split, he enrolled in the Biology group of the Faculty of Science and Mathematics in Belgrade, and graduated 4 years later. Then he enrolled in the Graduate Plant Physiology course, and after earning the MSc degree, was appointed assistant in the Institute of Botany of the same Faculty. He spent 18 months (1977–1979) as a Humboldt fellow in Biological Institute II, University of Freiburg, Germany, in Professor Hans Mohr's lab. Rade Konjević defended his PhD dissertation at Belgrade University in 1979. He was elected to the position of assistant professor in 1980, associate professor in 1989 and professor in 1993. During that time, he also was an external collaborator with the Plant Physiology Department of the Institute for Biological Research 'Siniša Stanković' (IBISS). He served IBISS in an executive position from 1981 through 1984. He was the Director of the Institute of Botany and Botanical Garden of the University in the period from 1997, and then as a Dean of the Faculty of Biology until 2002.

Rade Konjević actually showed a keen interest in plant physiology as early as his undergraduate student days, volunteering in the lab. The topic he was attracted to was the interaction of light and phytohormones in higher plant growth and development. While his early MSc and PhD work was dedicated to the relationship of phytochrome and gibberellins, he turned to the study of phototropic reactions later on. During that time, he actively participated in a team involved in studies of seed germination and dormancy.

Crucial for the switch to studies of phototropism were several stays in the Plant Research Laboratory at Michigan State University, East Lansing, from 1987 onwards. As a visiting professor, Rade Konjević joined the team of Professor Kenneth Poff, under the Department of energy (DOE)-supported project entitled 'Phototropic reaction of dicotyledonous plants'. Their experiments using different wavelengths and fluence rates of blue light resulted in the proposition that phototropism in *Arabidopsis thaliana* seedlings is mediated by at least two blue-light photoreceptor pigments. This was the basis of subsequent genetic and biochemical characterization of the phototropin receptor family in *Arabidopsis* and other plants.

From the beginning of his career, Rade Konjević took part as a leading member of our team, interested in light-induced germination of dormant seeds. These studies were greatly promoted by the Beltsuille Agricultural Research Centre/US Department of Agriculture (BARC/USDA) and IBISS joint project, led by Dr W. WanDerWoude and Rade Konjević in the late 1980s. Among the numerous factors and effectors of that process, the role of nitrogenous compounds evolving nitric oxide emerged in recent years. We very much appreciate the participation of Rade Konjević in that work, since his contributions to its planning, in evaluating the results and designing future projects were immeasurable.

Apart from being an enthusiastic scientist, an excellent teacher and an inspiring adviser, he was an

unforgettable person. For all of us, it was a privilege to work with him. As a colleague he was considerate and patient to hear other opinions, never imposing his own without a long, friendly discussion. As a teacher he never refused to help younger colleagues, trying to transmit his broad knowledge and to review their articles and dissertations. Rade is survived by two sons, Marko and Nikša. Along with them, we regret his untimely death. Members of the Plant Physiology Laboratory will always keep in living memory the time when he was among us.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960258507383153 Published online by Cambridge University Press