

OBITUARY

Miriam Galova

## In memoriam Ivan Žežula

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On 8 May 2001 we took leave of our colleague of many years and good friend Doc. RNDr. Ivan Žežula, CSc, former university teacher of inorganic and analytical chemistry.

He was born in Prague in 1927 and enjoyed a happy family life interrupted by the second World War and Nazi occupation of Bohemia. After the war he finished secondary school and started his university studies in chemistry and physics at the Charles University in Prague. His degree as “Rerum naturarum doctor” was obtained in 1952 studying with Professor Heyrovsky at the Institute of Physical Chemistry at the same university. He started professional work at the Research Institute for Electrochemical Physics and later at the Institute of Work Hygiene and Occupational Diseases in Prague, where he also finished his PhD study in the field of hygiene in radiochemistry in 1962. His works from that time on the double-layer effects upon electrode processes were highly appreciated by the founder of the scientific school, academician Frumkin himself, and cited many times by other researchers in the field.

His professional career continued at the newly founded Faculty of Sciences at the University of P.J. Šafárik in Kosice, where, in 1964, he was invited by the Dean to take over the post of head of the Inorganic Chemistry Department. He gave lectures in inorganic chemistry and continued his electrochemistry research. He understood his work not just as teaching but also as a mission. He inspired his students to love scientific work and to be honest in science as well as in life, which was also the motto he kept throughout his own life.

His habilitation thesis in inorganic chemistry was defended at Charles University in the violent (stormy) times in 1969. Owing to the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia and the following persecution, he was



not appointed as a docent, and furthermore, his firm beliefs and convictions deprived him of his post of head of the department and later even his vocation as a university teacher. As “politically unreliable” he was not allowed to come into contact with students. However, he was permitted to continue his research work until 1974, when he finally had to leave the university and became a second grade researcher at the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

The “velvet revolution” in 1989 brought new hope to many people, including Ivan Žežula. He returned to his beloved work as a university teacher – as reader in analytical chemistry – and to his favorite research in electrochemistry at the Department of Physical and Analytical Chemistry, Faculty of Sciences, University of P.J. Šafárik, where he stayed until his retirement in 1996. He was actually the founder and keen propagator of electrochemical research at the Faculty and the fruit of this work can still be observed. His students, where possible, continued faithfully in this field.

However, even when retired, he could not rest – this was not part of his nature. He continued to keep wide international contacts with electrochemical laboratories and researchers in the Czech Republic, Poland, Russia, Canada, and Germany. He took part in scientific conferences, trying to keep in contact with new knowledge in chemistry.

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M. Galova  
Department of Physical and Analytical Chemistry,  
Šafárik University, Moyzesova 11,  
04001 Kosice, Slovakia  
E-mail: mgalova@kosice.upjs.sk

Docent Ivan Žežula was a man with a wide knowledge of history, philosophy, literature, and music. He loved nature but mainly he loved people – his ability to make and maintain contacts was one of his main characteristics. He was a man worth emulating for his firm

moral attitude and faith. So he will remain in our thoughts. We, his friends and colleagues, and many generations of his students, loved him and will always remember him.

Ivan, rest in peace!