

PROF. IRENA PUČAR, MD, PHD (1932. – 2024.)



Our dear professor, Irena Pučar, who left an indelible mark on the Croatian rheumatological community through her dedicated work, exceptional expertise, and an incredible sense of humanity, has passed away on 17th May 2024. Along with her colleagues, she laid the foundations of Croatian rheumatology, and, through her teaching career and clinical work, she helped pave the rheumatological path for a great number of young physicians. She was the embodiment of professionalism, with an extraordinary sense of justice and equality. When it came to decision-making, her rationality was infused with a sense of empathy for both patients and colleagues.

Prof. Irena Pučar, MD, PhD was born on 23rd November 1932 in Zagreb. She graduated from the School of Medicine in Zagreb in 1958, and completed her medical internship in Sisak and Zagreb. In August 1962, she began working at the Institute for Rheumatic Diseases and Rehabilitation at the University Hospital Center Zagreb, and in 1964, she was appointed as the teaching and research assistant at the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, where she passed her specialty certification

exam the following year. She defended her doctoral dissertation in 1976 at the School of Medicine of the University of Zagreb and acquired the title of Primarius. In 1978, she was appointed to the teaching and research position of the Research Assistant at the Department of Physical Medicine and General Rehabilitation at the School of Medicine in Zagreb, for the “Physical Medicine and General Rehabilitation” course, with a position at the Institute for Rheumatic Diseases and Rehabilitation at the University Hospital Centre in Zagreb (Rebro). In 1981 she became an Assistant Professor at this Department, in 1987 she became an Associate Professor and in 1990 she acquired the title of a Full Professor. In addition to that, she was a lecturer at the University of Osijek, where she gave comprehensive lectures in the course of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. She mentored twenty undergraduate and five master’s theses, and she has participated as a member of the committees for the defence of several doctoral dissertations. In addition to that, she actively participated in numerous congresses held in Croatia and abroad. Furthermore, she was a member of the editorial board for the *Rheuma-*

tism journal and the *Croatian Medical Journal* in Zagreb, and an active member of several professional associations. She published over 80 research papers, mostly original ones, and received numerous awards, including plaque awards from the School of Medicine and the Yugoslav Rheumatological Association. She retired in 1994.

Despite her numerous professional obligations, she managed to achieve a great balance between work and family life. She had two children, Nina and Neven, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. In her interpersonal relationship she was polite, loyal and always open to communication. Her work ethic, pleasant personality, calm demeanour and the ability to understand the needs of others, especially patients, made her a great doctor and also a great boss. I had the honour of working with Professor Pučar for several years, and in that time, I gained new experiences and managed to expand my knowledge and skills.

May she rest in peace!

ASSOCIATE PROF. ĐURĐICA
BABIĆ-NAGLIĆ, MD, PhD
Physiatrist,
Rheumatologist (retired)