

Preface

This special issue is dedicated to Dr. Sc. Pavao Mildner, *professor emeritus* at University of Zagreb, who was for more than 40 years main person behind this journal, first as Head of the Editorial Board, then as Editor-in-Chief, and finally honoured with honorary editor title. During this long history, the journal has developed from primary professional and later semi-scientific, to a recognizable scientific journal in the fields of food science and technology and biotechnology. By the time Professor Mildner left the duty, the journal had achieved respectable international recognition and was cited in all major databases with steadily growing impact factor. Thus, it will not be an easy challenge for the Editorial Board and his successor to keep up with these high standards.

Besides honouring Prof. Mildner for his work dedicated to the journal's success, the aim of this special issue is also to acknowledge his pioneering and rich scientific work in the field of biochemistry in its widest sense, from the basic to the applied biochemical research in the fields of food science and biotechnology, as mentioned below in his brief biography. Prof. Mildner's role as a mentor played an important part in his long and fruitful academic career. He was particularly engaged in work with postgraduate and PhD students. Some of his former students have gladly accepted to contribute with their papers and to make this special issue dedicated to their teacher and mentor possible. Other contributors to this issue are also his dear colleagues, some of whom worked with him in the Editorial Board of the Journal.

The academic career of Prof. Mildner began in 1957, when he became lecturer in biochemistry at the Department of Biotechnology of the Faculty of Technology, University of Zagreb, and was also elected Head of the Laboratory of Biochemistry, which he ran until his retirement. Owing to his great engagement and high reputation that he enjoyed among his colleagues at the Faculty as well as in the wider academic community, Prof. Mildner succeeded in giving biochemistry an important role in the curricula of the studies of biotechnology and food technology at the Faculty. During his career, he translated seven consecutive editions of Peter Karlson's *Biochemistry*, which was accepted as a standard textbook for students of the Faculty of Food Technology and Biotechnology, as well as for students of the faculties of medicine, pharmacy, agriculture, and veterinary medicine. Prof. Mildner was a long-time teacher and Head of the Postgraduate Study of Biochemistry at the Faculty of Science. His activity as a teacher and mentor is best illustrated by the fact that under his guidance about 50 MSc or PhD theses were completed.

Scientific work of Prof. Mildner is very rich, especially considering the times in which he was active and his pioneering role in creating the conditions for research in the field of biochemistry. He is the author of more than 70 scientific papers, mostly published in renowned scientific journals, or as chapters in books. Through over 30 years of his leadership of the Laboratory of Biochemistry, the scientific work of Prof. Mildner and his associates embraced an entire spectre of research projects, from the essential to the applied research, from basic chemistry, in the early years, to the modern biochemical research within the newly developed areas, such as enzyme engineering. The main area of his research was, however, the study of the enzyme structure-activity relationship. Almost half of his scientific papers deal with this topic, from the first paper on this subject published in 1963 to his last published paper in 1989 (for some references to this work see paper by Barbarić in this issue). With this work he achieved a full international recognition, which was also confirmed by about a dozen of invited lectures he held on this subject at international congresses and European universities or institutes, so he can be considered as one of the most significant founders of modern biochemistry in our country.

Equally important to the role of Prof. Mildner as a scientist and teacher working on the development of biochemistry is his engagement in building the network of Croatian biochemists within scientific and professional societies in the country as well as in international associations. On the occasion of his 75th birthday he was presented with a special award from Croatian Biochemical Society for longtime activity in the advancement of biochemical science and its application, and the development of teaching biochemistry at the University of Zagreb and he was voted honorary member of the Society.



Prof. Mildner delivering a lecture at the 1st Slovenian Congress on Food and Nutrition, Bled, 1996



Prof. Mildner in the company of his colleagues at FEBS meeting in Warsaw, 1966

Among many other awards and certificates, honorary acknowledgements by home and international institutions and societies, Prof. Mildner was elected *professor emeritus* by the Senate of the University of Zagreb for his international merits for educational and scientific excellence, especially in biotechnical area. In 2001, Faculty of Food Technology and Biotechnology awarded him a golden plaque for his successful longtime work and particularly for his contribution to the Faculty's journal *Food Technology and Biotechnology*, as Editor-in-Chief for more than 35 years. It is his great merit that the Journal has achieved international recognition and has become one of the leading journals in Croatia. As appreciation of all his achievements during his fruitful academic career he was granted with the Life Achievement Award by the Croatian Government in 2004 for his entire scientific and research work in the area of biotechnical sciences.



Prof. Mildner in the laboratory with his colleagues, Zagreb, 1987

All of us who had the privilege of working, but also socializing with Professor Mildner are very pleased to have the opportunity to express in this way our honour to our teacher, mentor, and/or distinguished colleague, who would certainly like to read and discuss these papers, as he always did.

In the name of the authors contributing to the special issue, I would like to express my appreciation to the Editorial Office staff for their dedication and support in the preparation of this special issue.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "S. Barbarić".

Slobodan Barbarić
Guest Editor