



### **In Memoriam: Gennagiy Matsuka (1930–2017)**

On June 27, 2017, Gennadiy Kharlampiyovych Matsuka, an outstanding scientist and a wonderful person, Honorary Director of IMBG NAS of Ukraine, full member of NAS of Ukraine, Professor, parted from this life. It is hard to overestimate his scientific and organizational contribution into the development of molecular biology in Ukraine. First of all, G. Kh. Matsuka is one of the founders of the Institute of Molecular Biology and Genetics, NAS of Ukraine, well-known in the world, and a co-founder of the school of Ukrainian molecular biologists in the field of molecular biology of higher organisms.

His scientific path started in 1959, at the Institute of Biochemistry named after O. V. Palladin, the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, where he defended his PhD thesis in 1963. After scientific internship at the Moscow State University named after M. V. Lomonosov under the leadership of A. M. Belozersky, full member of the Academy, Gennadiy Kharlampiyovych headed the Department of Biochemistry of Nucleic Acids, the Institute of Biochemistry.

A significant landmark in the life of Gennadiy Kharlampiyovych was the foundation of the Institute of Molecular Biology and Genetics, where he was a permanent director from 1975 till 2003, taking huge efforts, contributing his energy, scientific and organizational talent to create a scientific research institution of the European level in the field of life sciences in this country. One of his most valuable achievements was establishing the atmosphere of creativity, constructive and friendly criticism, and mutual assistance in the Institute. It was especially relevant during hard 1990s, when science was left to survive. History is known to move in a spiral – at present, Ukrainian scientists have to demonstrate miracles of heroism and self-sacrifice again for Ukraine to remain a civilized country and for the word “science” not to vanish from the vocabulary of its citizens.

Full member of NAS of Ukraine, G. Kh. Matsuka dedicated over 40 years of his life to the development of molecular biology of higher organisms, in particular, to the study of molecular mechanisms of protein biosynthesis and regulation of gene expression at the translation level. It was under his guidance that unique investigations of structural and functional specificities of a number of tRNA and amino-

acyl-tRNA synthetases were made. He is a co-author of a scientific discovery “Capability of cells, producing specific proteins, to change the synthesis rate of specific tRNA in the course of differentiation”. In addition to fundamental research, Gennadiy Kharlampiyovych invested a lot of efforts into creating the biotechnological trend at the Institute. For instance, modern technologies of obtaining recombinant interferon and creating non-toxic immunosuppressors of the new generation were elaborated with his extreme support. Scientific achievements of Matsuka were highlighted in over 250 scientific works. G. Kh. Matsuka coached 20 PhD and 5 Dr. Sci., thus founding a world-renowned school in the field of molecular mechanisms of protein synthesis.

*Biopolymers and Cell*, a scientific journal, founded by G. Kh. Matsuka, ~~full member of NASU~~, over 20 years ago, is currently a popular specialized publication, cited both in Ukraine and far beyond its borders.

The teaching activity of Gennadiy Kharlampiyovych is closely connected to the Biology Department of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, where he was Professor and the head of the affiliated branch of Biochemistry Department for a long time. His lectures were quite popular due to precise and highly professional manner of teaching and presentation of newly published achievements of international scientific community.

G. Kh. Matsuka made a significant contribution into elaborating the strategy of development for biological science in Ukraine. From 1988 till 2001, he headed the Department of molecular biology, biochemistry, experimental and clinical physiology, NAS of Ukraine, holding the position of Academician-Secretary. He was directly involved into the creation of the National Committee to Combat AIDS under the President of Ukraine and headed it for three years, starting with 1993. Gennadiy Kharlampiyovych was the head of the interdepartmental scientific council in the problems of molecular biology for a long time.

He initiated the creation and was the first head of the specialized scientific council for defense of PhD and Dr. Sci. theses in ~~specializations~~ of molecular biology and molecular genetics at IMBG NASU and held this position for over 25 years.

G. Kh. Matsuka was decorated with numerous awards for his scientific achievements. He is the Laureate of the State Prize of Ukraine in the field of science and technology (1986) and the Laureate of O. V. Palladin Award (1979). G. Kh. Matsuka was awarded the Badge of Honor Order (1980), the Order of the Red Banner of Labor (1986), the Medal “For Valorous Labor and in Commemoration of V.I. Lenin’s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary” (1970), the Order of Prince Yaroslav the Wise, V class, (2004) and the Badge of the High Achiever in Education of Ukraine (2004). In 1999, Gennadiy Kharlampiyovych was announced the Person of the Year in Ukraine in the field of science. In 2003, he was awarded the Order of Christ the Savior for founding and heading the Institute of Molecular Biology and Genetics NAS of Ukraine for 30 years, for nobility of his soul, for high scientific thinking and patriotism.

Gennadiy Kharlampiyovych was a highly intelligent and talented person, richly endowed with the best possible human qualities, such as modesty, warm-heartedness, rectitude, decency, and exceptional sense of humor. Thus, the main awards of Gennadiy Kharlampiyovych are respect, appreciation, and love of people, which accompanied him all his life and will remain in the soul of everyone, who knew him. He will forever be our beloved director, Friend, and Teacher, living in the hearts of scientists of the Institute.

G. V. Elska

full member of NAS of Ukraine,

Director of the Institute of Molecular Biology and Genetics, NAS of Ukraine