

To the 80th jubilee of Viktor Anatoliyovych Kunakh, Corresponding Member of the NAS of Ukraine



On 28 April 2026, Viktor Anatoliyovych Kunakh — an outstanding Ukrainian scientist in plant biology and biotechnology, Doctor of Biological Sciences, Professor, Corresponding Member of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Head of the Department of Cell Population Genetics at the Institute of Molecular Biology and Genetics of the NAS of Ukraine, and President of the Vavilov Society of Geneticists and Breeders of Ukraine — celebrates his 80th birthday.

Born on April 28, 1946, in Zhytomyr region, he graduated with honors in 1969 from Taras Shevchenko Kyiv State University as a biologist-geneticist and teacher of biology and chemistry. He began his scientific career being still a student at the M.G. Kholodny Institute of Botany of the NAS of Ukraine and worked at the Institute of Molecular Biology and Genetics since 1971. He defended his candidate thesis in 1975 and his doctoral thesis in 1989. In 1983, he founded the Laboratory of Cell Population Genetics, later transformed into a department, and in 1997 was elected a Corresponding Member of the NAS of Ukraine.

Viktor Kunakh was among the first in Ukraine and the former USSR to pioneer genetic studies of cultured plant cells. He substantiated the concept of *in vitro* culture as a distinct, artificially created biological system governed by population-level laws, developing the foundation of a new field — cell population genetics. His work focuses on genomic variability and selection processes in cell populations, especially on the development of highly productive strains that synthesize biologically active compounds. For the first time worldwide, such strains of *Rauvolfia serpentina*, *Panax ginseng*, *Rhodiola rosea*, and *Ungernia victoris* were introduced into industrial production.

He is the author of over 650 scientific publications, including two textbooks, 12 monographs, and 44 patents in Ukraine and the former USSR. A gifted organizer and mentor, he has supervised 5 doctoral and 20 candidate theses and remains



active in scientific councils, editorial boards, and international organizations.

Among his honors are the State Prize of Ukraine in Science and Technology (2005), the V.Ya. Yur'iev Prize (2000), the M.G. Kholodny Prize (2007), and the S.M. Gershenson Prize (2015) of the NAS of Ukraine, along with distinctions from the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine for the services to the Ukrainian people, and the NAS of Ukraine.

We warmly congratulate Viktor Kunakh on his 80th birthday and wish him good health, inspiration, further achievements, and many happy years with his family, students, and colleagues.