

In memoriam

Associate Professor Sava Juranov, PhD (July 25, 1949 – November 18, 2020)

After a short illness, Bulgarian micropalaeontologist, stratigrapher and university professor Sava Juranov unexpectedly passed away on November 18, 2020, at the age of 71. His professional work was focused on the stratigraphy of the Paleogene System in Bulgaria. He was the first Bulgarian geologist to implement small foraminifera for the biostratigraphic subdivision of the Paleogene in Bulgaria and to prove, by means of biostratigraphy, the complexity of the geological makeup of the Paleogene sedimentary successions in the eastern part of the Stara Planina Mountain. The geology of the Paleogene sediments in Eastern Bulgaria held a special importance in Dr Juranov's scientific interests, as he dedicated much of his professional efforts to elucidating their age, lithology, boundaries, geographical distribution and spatial interrelations throughout his whole career.

Sava Juranov was born on July 25, 1949, in the town of Pirdop (W Bulgaria), where he completed his primary and secondary education. A little-known fact is that, in his free time, he aspired to be a stage actor. In the words of his friends and colleagues Drs Stefka Darakchieva and Yuliya Hristova, “only rarely, but with thrilled excitement, did Sava share his photographs from the time when he participated in a school play based on Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* in his home town of Pirdop”. Fate, however, had different plans for him and only allowed him to somewhat fulfil his acting dreams through his son, celebrated Bulgarian stage and voice actor Zhivko Juranov.

In 1974, Sava Juranov graduated from Sofia University “St Kliment Ohridski” with a Master's degree in Geology and specialisation in Palaeontology and Stratigraphy. Immediately after graduation, he started work as a researcher in Chelopech. In 1975, he joined the academic staff of the University of Mining and Geology as an Assistant Professor,



Photo credit: Prof. Kristalina Stoykova.

where he led practical courses in “Palaeontology”. Soon after that, Sava Juranov began work on his doctoral thesis “Biostratigraphy of the Paleogene and lower Eocene in part of the Eastern Stara Planina Mountain based on planktonic foraminifera”, which he successfully defended in 1982.

In 1989, Dr Sava Juranov was invited to join the academic staff of Sofia University “St Kliment Ohridski”, where he was promoted to Associate Professor. There, he read lectures and led practical courses in Stratigraphy, Micropalaeontology, and

Taxonomy and Biostratigraphy (the latter together with Assoc. Prof. Violeta Cheshmedzhieva, PhD) for geology students in the Bachelor's programme; Palaeontology and Historical Geology for biology, geography and history students in the Bachelor's programme; and Micropalaeontological Analysis for geology students in the Master's programme. Dr Juranov was also scientific supervisor of the theses of numerous postgraduate and two PhD students.

Together with teaching, Dr Sava Juranov also held administrative positions in the university. From 1995 to 1999, he was the Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs. During his term, the education in Geology was modernised and adopted the three-level model of Bachelor's, Master's and PhD degree programmes. Later on, Dr Juranov was appointed Head of the Department of Geology and Palaeontology (Faculty of Geology and Geography), position which he held from 2007 to 2011. At his initiative, the department was renamed to Department of Geology, Palaeontology and Fossil Fuels. In his administrative duties, Dr Sava Juranov was always dedicated to the betterment and furtherance of geological education in the university.

Despite his immense work load with academic affairs, Sava Juranov never abandoned fieldwork. During the 1990s, he led the geological mapping in scale 1:25 000 in the Eastern Stara Planina Mountain. His professionalism and expertise made him a sought-after consultant for Bulgarian and foreign companies for oil and gas exploration in the Bulgarian part of the Black Sea.

Sava Juranov's friends and colleagues remember him as a kind, warm-hearted, diligent and unostentatious person committed to his scientific research. His unique, often tongue-in-cheek, sense of humour made him a delightful company.

I met him while I was a young student at Sofia University, where I took his courses in Stratigraphy, Micropalaeontology, Taxonomy and Biostratigraphy, and Micropalaeontological Analysis. I remember him as a charismatic, conscientious lecturer, very generous with his time and always willing to come up with yet another way of explaining any concept my fellow students and I found difficult to grasp. He somehow never failed in weaving his subtle sense of humour into the dry theory, which made his lectures a pleasure to attend. During examinations, Dr Juranov often asked witty, humorous, thought-provoking questions, which required application of all our knowledge and not just textbook recitations. He was very supportive of young researchers, always willing to offer kind words of encouragement, constructive criticism or praise where he thought it was due.

Sava Juranov is survived by his wife, two children, one grandchild, and numerous students and colleagues, who will greatly miss him.

Georgi Granchovski

SELECTED CONTRIBUTIONS OF ASSOC. PROF. SAVA JURANOV

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