

IN MEMORIAM
PROFESSOR PhD. LAZĂR ION-VIOREL
(07.01.1951 - 21.11.2012)

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In the last month of 2012, there occurred the premature death of the man who was Professor Ph.D. Lazăr Ion-Viorel. Through his disappearance, the didactic and research activity of the biology secondary education in Romania has suffered an irreparable loss. His personality joins those few teachers who have contributed to the building of the life experience of generations of students, to whom they have instilled the love of nature. Of these, I would like to mention, along with the fellow Lazăr Ion-Viorel, other teachers who still continue to work: Professor Marian Niță (Craiova), prof. Iancu Lucian Dinulescu (Timișoara), prof. Ph.D. Gheorghe Ploaie (Râmnicu Vâlcea), prof. Ph.D. Mihail Dumitru (Târgoviște), etc.

I have known the man who would become one of our few friends since the beginning of his didactic activity, assisting in a demonstrative biology lesson (practical), held at a high school in Craiovița Nouă neighbourhood of Craiova. Given our frequent meetings, we did not exactly remember the year when we first met, thus making friends “forever”.

Born on the day of Saint John, in Apele Vii village, Dolj County, he spent his childhood and adolescence in southern Oltenia, near the Danube, an area rich in traditions and customs. Moreover, the theme of his doctoral thesis has reverberations from this period. He attended the High School of Bechet, which he graduated in 1970. Favoured by the nature of the native region and stimulated by the constant search character that marked his personality, he studied Biology, courses started in Brasov, continued in Craiova and finished at the Faculty of Biology, University of Bucharest (year 1978) where he obtained the certificate of a Biology teacher. He combined, since the beginning of his teaching activity, the theoretical knowledge of biology with its practical aspects, being employed (except for the first year, when was a teacher at a school from Urmeniș, Bistrița-Năsăud County), in schools of Craiova, Dolj County: Children's Club Craiova, Nicolae Titulescu National College of Craiova, Dolj County School Inspectorate. He permanently imposed himself a training activity through the completion of vocational postgraduate courses (apiculture postgraduate course in Bucharest, 1980-1981) and pedagogical training activities. His professional training was crowned with the title of Doctor in Natural Sciences, Biology Specialization, the thesis being carried out under the competent guidance of Dr. Dumitru Murariu, correspondent member of the Romanian Academy, director of *Grigore Antipa* Museum of Natural History Bucharest. I think that the theme of his PhD thesis, entitled *Estimation of the dynamics of amphibian and reptile fauna of southern Dolj in correlation with the evolution of the hydrographic basins*, originated in the observation of wildlife in the Danube marshes since childhood. Moreover, this topic shows profound practical applications of great interest in research, fact which led to his co-optation into the collective of the research grant POLMEDJIU (2008-2011), supported by the CPM - Bucharest.

His professional training gained in quality after getting the qualifier of *UNESCO trainer*, which allowed him to address in this capacity, many activities, among which we mention: *Environmental Education* (2004-2008), *Leisure and Performance-Weekend School* (2009-2011), *Water and sanitation in rural areas* (2004), *Health Education* (2003), *Psychology of extracurricular activities* (permanent), *Education for Sustainable Development* (2010-2011).

On this basis, he attended various professional courses, obtaining other qualifications: *Training for the future-EUROTEACHER I*, Module I - Design, organization and evaluation of teaching (2006, Dolj C. C. D.) and *Training for the future-EUROTEACHER I*, Module II - Management and communication (2008, C. C. D. Dolj), *Training for trainers in adult education* (2009, Dolj C. C. D.), *Educational Management* (2011, Mehedinți C. C. D.), *Initiation in computer use* (2002, Dolj C. C. D.), etc. In order to acquire a sound professional training at European level, Prof. Ph.D. Viorel Ion Lazăr participated in numerous specializations, international conferences and other activities organized by the competent bodies in other countries. Among these, there can be mentioned: specialization at Nestved - Copenhagen (Denmark, November 1995), the international conference held in Kazane, the Russian Federation (November 2006), the Romanian-Bulgarian Symposium from Vidin (October 2007), the international conference in Sofia, Bulgaria (October 2011). The professional activity carried out by Professor Dr. Viorel Ion Lazăr was appreciated by accepting the submitted projects, granting numerous national and international awards, publishing and distributing the edited works. The recognition of the value of his outstanding professional activity is illustrated also by the degrees and diplomas awarded in time: *Highlighted professor* for his activity in education (1985), the medal *Educational Merit - CLASS I* (2004), the *Diploma “GHEORGHE LAZĂR” - CLASS I* (2007), various other awards and prizes awarded by the Ministry of Education (1999-2009).

Also, many of his works were awarded prizes by the competent bodies. Among these works, it is worth mentioning: *The School Museum of Biology-bridge between nature and students* (third prize, 2008); *Extension of desertification - a real danger in Dolj County* (second prize, 2000); *Biological water quality status of the Jiu river from*

its entry in Dolj County to its confluence with the Danube (second prize, 1999); *Eternal Glory to His Highness-WATER!* (first prize at the Environmental Competition, Tulcea-Sulina, 2011). It was also the national winner in the category B, U4Energy International Competition (Sofia, Bulgaria).

The appreciation he received, as well as his exceptional professional training, his qualities as a co-ordinator of the professional activity and gained respect among teachers, are highlighted by the fact that he was appointed speciality inspector - biology, within the framework of I. S. J. Dolj (2002-2009), was part of the group of experts who suggested topics for biology discipline in school competitions, being also the co-author of four editions of the *Guide for baccalaureate preparation, Plant and animal biology*, Sigma Publishing House, Craiova (2008-2011).

In recognition of all his activities, Prof. Dr. Viorel-Ion Lazăr is mentioned in the "Encyclopaedia of Romanian personalities" (biographical encyclopaedia of contemporary men and women with successful careers in Romania), as well as in Volume I of the work of Emil Lazarescu "Romanian values, European values".

He wrote and published 20 speciality and methodology books, offering the acquired experience and skills to his colleagues. Among them, we mention *Practical Biology* (LAZĂR V., NITA M., BUȘE V. – 2005, Ed Arves, Craiova, 450 pp.), *Psychology of extracurricular activities* (LAZĂR V. & CĂRĂȘEL A. - 2007, Ed. Arves, Craiova, 108 pp.), *The lesson-basic form of the organization of the teaching-learning-assessment process in biology* (LAZĂR V. & NICOLAE M. -2007, Ed. Arves, 248 pp.), *Didactic methods used in teaching biology* (LAZĂR V. & CĂPRĂRIN D.-2008, Ed. Arves, 384 pp.), *Methodological guide of evaluation* (LAZĂR V., NEGREA V., ȘTEFĂNESCU M., DAȘU M.-2012, Ed. Arves, Craiova), etc. In many of these activities and guidelines, he addressed the precepts used in teaching biology as recommended by the new method of education known as **didactics**.

In this activity, along with specialized professional training, we believe that graduating the School of Journalism Felix Aderca, Craiova, (2000-2001) was really useful for him.

In order to train and direct the work and research methodology of teachers, researchers and students in the study of the phenomenon of life, he initiated and led, as editor, several academic and professional publications: *Voice T*, the publication for youth of the National College *Nicolae Titulescu* Craiova (Title of LAUREATE); *GENESIS*, the national journal of biology teachers; *Education-Human-Nature*, the journal published by Alexandru Buia School Museum of the National College *Nicolae Titulescu* Craiova; *Assistant* magazine, a publication of *Sfântul Ștefan* Ecological School Craiova; *Eco-volunteer* magazine, publication of the Eco-schools of Dolj County.

Of these, a remarkable presence in the Romanian publishing is the *GENESIS* journal, conceived and edited as the journal of biology teachers in secondary education. We believe that publishing this journal (2003-2012), along with its "older sister", the journal *NATURE* (which is mainly addressed to "seniors" in higher education) is a worthy achievement for the Romanian biology. In the pages of *GENESIS* (indexed CNCSIS), both teachers of biology in secondary education and university specialists, researchers from the profile institutions in Romania, and pupils or students in their final years, published studies, articles, summaries resulting from research, as well as works of scientific information of theoretical biology and methodology. In its pages, there published valuable works alongside many others, Prof. PhD. Gheorghe Popescu (University of Craiova), Prof. PhD. Marius Skolka (*Ovidius* University), Prof. PhD. Gheorghe Gamaneci (*C. Brancusi* University, Targu Jiu), Prof. PhD. Ion Tița (UMF Craiova), Lecturer PhD. Ion Nicolae (Craiova), Prof. Viorel Cotleanu-Inspector of biology, ISJ Brașov, Lecturer Mihaela Ionescu (U.M.F. Craiova), PhD. Jeanina Cîrstoiu (University of Bucharest), researcher Sorina Matacă (the Iron Gates Region Museum, Drobeta Turnu Severin), researcher Marian Tudor (*Ovidius* University, Constanta), etc. Besides the aforementioned authors, there also published the signatories of this article and two collaborators from Japan: Prof. PhD. Junko Ebata, Osaka City University and Prof. PhD. Hydeyuki Furukawa, Nagoya University, Japan. *GENESIS* is the journal of the biology teachers across the country, the journal having editorial offices in almost all counties. Professor Viorel-Ion Lazăr organized the National Conference of Biology *GENESIS* (editions I-VII) in Brașov, Drobeta Turnu Severin, Târgu Jiu, Timișoara, Iași, Craiova, Râmnicu Vâlcea, which offered the biology teachers nationwide the opportunity of meeting and debating the various aspects of the professional life, research activity and training methods. The biology teachers, the School County Directorates and various sponsors contributed to the success of these meetings. Within the framework of each of the editions of these National Conferences, there were organized thematic trips meant to get teachers familiar with the local nature. I consider that the activity of the journal *GENESIS* should be continued. In life, a human being may disappear, but not an idea.

Through his entire activity, Prof. PhD. Lazăr Ion-Viorel is a leading example.

He left us shortly before the retirement age, in full creative effort.

He had many plans and professional goals he wanted to achieve.

He always had beside him his family, colleagues, who understood him and, in many cases, administrative and decision-making bodies that helped him in his activity, regardless of the settlement in Romania where actions took place.

He left behind the image of a man with a noble character and wonderful memories. Our life is made up of memories and we ourselves will become memories.

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In a moment of relaxation, along with his childhood friend, PhD. Adrian Nastase (the Oltenia Museum, Craiova).