

## **PROFESSOR DR. HABIL. GYULA L. FARKAS IS 65 YEARS OLD**

### **Curriculum and Congratulations**

Dear Reader. The present commemoration only seemingly belongs among the easier genres of writing, even though it is about a friend and colleague whose work and results may be recounted only with great difficulty due to such an abundant career.

The difficulty begins when the commemoration is to be made with humility towards science, with due respect, with truth and with appropriate perspective. This constrains me to moderation. I would like not only to list the merits of GYULA L. FARKAS, but also to recall a short period of the profession, placing the person into the environment.

It is an honour for me to do this between the walls of our Alma Mater, in the columns of its periodical.

GYULA L. FARKAS was born in Szabadszállás, on the Great Hungarian Plain, on 11 April 1932. After finishing his elementary and secondary school education in Kecskemét, between 1950 and 1954 he was a student at the University of Szeged. Those years are mentioned by many today as difficult, gloomy and dark, but it was the period of our youth and it was perhaps our fortune in a sense that we were taught and educated by the great humanist scientists of that age and they were models for us. It was LAJOS BARTUCZ among them who discovered in GYULA L. FARKAS a highly needed new young colleague. He was already a demonstrator in 1953 in the Department of Anthropology and, after a short period of teaching in an elementary school, he was invited and appointed a professor's assistant in 1955.

From this point on, his educational academic career rose rapidly. In 1960 he was first assistant, and 1976 he became a candidate of biological science. In 1977 he was appointed university lecturer, and then in 1980 head of department. In 1985 he was awarded his doctorate of biological science, and in 1988 he became a university professor as head of department.

Between 1970 and 1980 he was Secretary of the Anthropological Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, while in the cycle 1980-85 he was its president, and he has remained a member since 1985. Since 1980 he has been chief editor of *Acta Biologica Szegediensis*. Since 1990 he has been president of the Szeged Board of the Hungarian Biological Association. This is a very nice picture, but let us place this career into a picture of the times.

In the evolution of Hungarian biology, the 1960s and 1970s meant the great acme, the bloom. This was the same in Szeged. The show-piece of biology, the Biological Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, was built in Szeged and some biology departments of the university were given a new, modern building. But there were not only winners, but also losers in the fight for development. Artificially created ideologies clashed. A battle was going on within science between the internationality-nationality of the branches, the experimental-descriptive, the molecular-individual and the submolecular-supraindividual views and for the establishment of priorities. There were

casualties of this struggle for life. Such was our small profession.

In spite of its international-quality representatives and researchers, the profession was set back, on the grounds that it did not have the „critical mass” needed for its development. The procedure was not conducted according to that script in Szeged, though.

Scientists can be typified in various ways. One species is the „*homo apoliticus*”, who can be found only in scientific conferences and in the warm „niche” of laboratories. The other species is the „*homo politicus*”. This latter also has subspecies. One type is self-serving and self-gratifying. The other type, fortunately, is not so rare, and can sometimes be discovered: the scientist who uses politics, scientific and educational public work for the good of his profession.

I put GYULA L. FARKAS into the last category: his public service and activities have served the present and future of the department.

He has been a member of many permanent and ad hoc committees of the university. He has been a member of the Educational Board of the Faculty of Sciences, and of the professional supervising committee of the department. He has been responsible for foreign students in the faculty and a member of the disciplinary committee for students, while involved as a lay member of the county court for cases involving young people. For several years he was secretary of the Expert Biologists Committee of JATE Faculty of Sciences. And last, he ran the basketball section of SZEOL for years.

He did not step on anybody on his way, and when he was shot at, he was not protected by an armour of medals. However, he protected, sheltered and developed his department as a junior assistant and then first assistant, against powerful professors and scientists.

He could do this because beyond all these he taught special courses, led seminars and examined students. He taught special courses for archaeologists, ethnographers and college students of biology.

He has directed the diploma work of 77 students and the studies of 12 doctoral and 2 Ph.D. students. He has been a member of entrance and final state examination boards.

He has been opponent of numerous academic doctoral and candidate dissertations, and president, secretary and a member of juries. For 10 years he has been a member of an Expert Committee of the National Postgraduate Degree Granting Board of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. During this time, 18 people have earned academic degrees in or close to the profession. That is more than 3 times the number in the cycle before him. He has been not a bad spirit, but a good shepherd of the academic leading body of the profession.

He is currently a member of the Habilitation Board of the Biological Expert Committee at JATE.

The number of his scientific publications exceeds 200 (an exact list of his earlier publications is to be found in „Bibliography of GYULA FARKAS 1953-93”, JATE Press, Szeged, 1994, pp. 37).

He is not fond of traveling, but wherever he has been, he took good news of his country, town and university. He has given 37 lectures abroad. The spiritual and material treasures of the department, summarized in an exhibition, are gladly visited by

foreign researchers and students of local schools. The anthropological findings of the department from historical ages is acknowledged throughout Europe. This reputation was founded on the cooperation of LAJOS BARTUCZ and FERENC MÓRA. These treasures have not only been preserved by GYULA L. FARKAS, but also developed through friendship with OTTÓ TROGMAYER.

I appreciate it that GYULA L. FARKAS has let himself be influenced by the examined environment, since he has taken part in much field work and has himself collected the data of live investigations. His scientific interests have followed the traditions of the department. The examination of the population living in the Carpathian Basin in historical ages and the biological features of the present-day Hungarians were assigned by LAJOS BARTUCZ as compulsory tasks for every Hungarian anthropologist. His third main research field involves the physical and biological changes in children and youths in relation to time. This research direction was fueled by recent times and the factors influencing the changes.

He is also a worthy follower of great predecessors in disseminating the results of science to the public in a good quality, but in an easily intelligible manner, as proven by his 127 lectures in the country.

Besides nurturing tradition, he has always followed fashion, but always fashion filled with content. Interdisciplinarity = cooperation with archaeologists and ethnographers. International cooperation = discovery and processing of an early Bronze Age cemetery in Mokrin, or the cooperation with foreign colleagues. Methodological reform = an attempt to organize the bone chemistry laboratory in the department.

With foresight, he knows that only those can expect respect and honour in the future, who have given these to the past. His works of science history belong here.

In these days of total computerization, he has performed a great service with his bibliographical activity. By collecting and publishing the scientific results of Hungarian anthropologists, he has made the spectrum of our profession known in wide circles both at home and abroad, and he has provided useful help for students preparing their diploma work.

Dear Reader. After this listing of some of the facts, please allow me a modicum philosophical relaxation.

Time is advancing. The occasions and happenings are the consequences of the changes in society. The connections to one particular person and personality cannot be ruled out. I place the personality for every happening in the Department of Anthropology of JATE during the last 40 years, with consideration to both time and social factors, on GYULA L. FARKAS. To paraphrase a modern slogan, we may say that all this could not have come true without the support of workers, students and colleagues. But they were also selected by him!

Dear GYULA! Finally, I sincerely wish that your eventual successor at the Department of Anthropology of JATE will have such a friend who, in due time, will remember him with warm words and that he too will be worthy of them.

GY. DEZSÓ

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