

**IN MEMORIAM
PROF. DR. HABIL.
BÉLA MATKOVICS
(1927–1998)**



Dr. BÉLA MATKOVICS, retired head of the Biological Isotope Laboratory, has died at the age of 72. His death came dramatically and unexpectedly.

Béla Matkovics was born in Csongrád on 12 July 1927. He finished his elementary and secondary school studies in Bonyhád and Baja. His medical university studies were performed in Szeged between 1945 and 1951. He was qualified as a physician in 1951. In the same year he began to study chemistry, and obtained his diploma in chemistry in 1955. Between 1950 and 1955 he worked at the Department of Medical Chemistry of the University of Medical School, Szeged. His research work was focused on the microbial transformation and on the effects of steroids. His investigations were then directed towards the study of redox properties. Since 1955 he has been working at the József Attila University in Szeged. In 1956 he specialized in medical clinical chemistry. Up to 1969 he was employed at the Department of Organic Chemistry. In September 1964 he became the candidate of chemical sciences and in December 1964 he defended his university doctoral thesis.

Between 1951–1955 he was an assistant at the Department of Organic Chemistry. During this period biochemistry became a new discipline separating from organic chemistry. Dr. BÉLA MATKOVICS was the first who has started to organise the education of biochemistry at our University. Between 1955–1965 he worked as a senior lecturer and from 1965 as an associate professor in chemistry. Four years later he joined to the Biochemical and Genetical Group organized within the frame of the Biological Chairs. During this time his research interest turned into the direction of enzymes involved in oxidative metabolism. He realised in time, that oxidative processes, free radicals, mostly oxygen radicals will come into focus in the biological research. He was one of the first researchers in Hungary who has started to study the lipid peroxidation processes and the members of the antioxidant systems in living organisms. Due to a reorganisation within the Biological Chairs, the Biological Isotope Laboratory was established in 1974. Dr. BÉLA MATKOVICS became the head of this Laboratory where he continued the examination of the oxidative stress and the antioxidant systems.

He visited most of the European countries, gave lectures or performed research work at different Universities of Europe. In 1959 he was awarded by a fellowship of the International Atomic Energy Agency (Vienna) and spent one year at the First Department of Chemistry of the Karolinska University in Sweden, in collaboration with Prof. S. BERGSTROM and Prof. B. SAMUELSSON.

Dr. MATKOVICS maintained good relations with our Twin Universities for a long time. I mention only the 20 years old research-friendship with the Institute of Chemistry, University of Novi Sad, Yugoslavia and with the Department of Biophysics, University of Lodz, Poland. In appreciation of his work he got an award in 1985 for „Coordination of the friendship between Polish and Hungarian Universities”. For education he got the „Excellent lecturer and educator” award from the Ministry of Education two times, in 1983 and 1992.

It was a great pleasure for Prof. MATKOVICS to work in different scientific societies. He was a member of the Hungarian Chemical Society from 1951, the Hungarian Biochemical Society from 1960, the Society of Free Radical Research (SFRR) from 1984. His work was honoured with „Than Karoly memorial medal” by the Hungarian Chemical Society. This year he got the „Dr. H. Falk Price” from the Society of the Free Radical Research (Europe) Hungarian Branch.

Up to now he was working as associate president of SFRR Hungarian Branch from 1991 and associate president of Hungarian Chemical Society Local Section in Szeged, from 1989.

It would be hard enough to list the name of his coworkers. There are a lot of researchers in Hungary and some in the world, who have started to build their career with generous help of Prof. MATKOVICS.

Dear Reader, you can make ensure of looking at the authors of 288 scientific articles and 38 chapters or books which were made together coworkers. Dr. BÉLA MATKOVICS presented gladly the results of his Laboratory at conferences. He hold 194 lectures.

Although Prof. MATKOVICS was retired officially from July, 1997, his everyday program did not change. He started the day in the library, then spent the day in the Laboratory. He was sorry to hear about the structural reorganisation of the Laboratory.

We got the bad news about his illness in August . . . and he left us in October.

Professor MATKOVICS provided us with countless demonstration of kindness, enthusiasm, joy, scientific rigor and pleasure in doing good science. He will stay in our memory forever.

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