

Opening speech

Honoured Guests!

On this remarkable day let me greet Károly Németh the President of the Presidium of the Hungarian People's Republic, the members of the Szent-Györgyi family here present, the representatives of the Diplomatic corps, the Ministry of Health and Cultural Affairs, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the representatives of the Communist Party, and state and social organizations of Szeged and Csongrád County. I also wish to welcome colleagues from Hungarian and foreign Universities, professors, honorary doctors, lecturers and students of our University.

Upon the request of the Council of the Szeged University of Medical Sciences, the Presidium of the Hungarian People's Republic has approved the renaming our University after Albert Szent-Györgyi who was the Head of the Department of Medical Chemistry between 1928 and 1945, as well as dean and rector of the University. I am convinced that any explanation is unnecessary why the Szeged University of Medical Sciences wishes to bear the name of Albert Szent-Györgyi. This decision, which was formulated even in Szent-Györgyi's lifetime, and cherished since then, was not prompted by actual interests but by firm and lasting principles and facts.

Scientific respect, the reputation of Albert Szent-Györgyi as well as his devotion to human mankind, progress and science and his sense of responsibility justify our wish. As John T. Edsall wrote in his obituary: "Albert Szent-Györgyi was a scientist and an incomparable humanitarian man". Szent-Györgyi himself wrote in his autobiography: "never has the World known an era more whirling than this, therefore, there has to come a paramount change in our ideas as well." "For me" he wrote "it is clear what this change is: It is a transition from a pre-scientific into a scientific era which is not only a fundamental change, but it has come unexpectedly without giving us time to adapt to it."

In his autobiography Szent-Györgyi wrote: "Is not science about living society? I believe it is. Science is first of all the society of people without any limitations in time or space. Science opens unlimited possibilities if we work together instead of pushing advantages at the expense of each other. Science has always helped in understading and dominating Nature. It will perhaps also help us to comprehend ourselves while a new way of human life is being created, the richness and beauty of which cannot be described even with the liveliest imagination."

The lifework and attitude of Albert Szent-Györgyi which have never seemed more up-to-date than nowadays, prompted us to decide to rename our University.





Opening of the Renaming Celebration in the National Theatre of Szeged — by Professor János Szilárd, Rector of the Medical University.