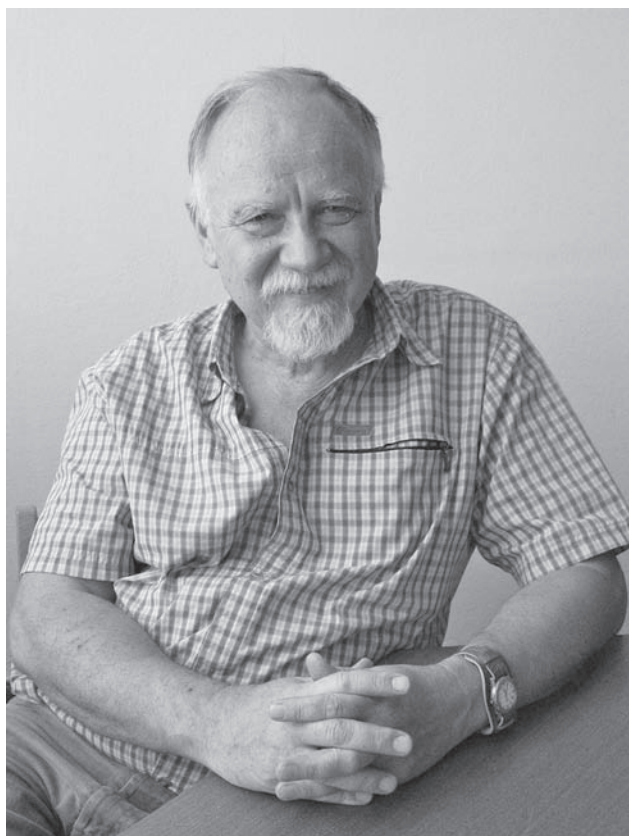


This issue of the General Physiology and Biophysics journal was assembled as a Festschrift on the occasion of Professor PAVOL BALGAVÝ 65th birthday in June 2009



Professor Pavol Balgavý was born on June 16, 1944 in Malé Leváre, Slovakia. He obtained his academic education in mathematics and physics at Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava (1961–1963), and at Faculty of Physics, Lomonosov Moscow State University (1963–1968) where he studied physics of solid matter. He started his professional carrier at the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava in the Department of Molecular Genetics, Institute of Biology, and he continued at the Institute of Experimental Oncology. His early work includes the study of molecular mechanism of DNA reparation after ultraviolet irradiation. In 1974, he joined Faculty of Pharmacy, Comenius University in Bratislava where he has spent the most of his professional life. In the first period of his stay, he was employed at the Department of Analytical Chemistry, after a reorganization at the Department of Physical Chemistry of Drugs where he works as the Head at the present time. Prof. Balgavý received his PhD in biophysics in 1981. In 1995, he defended his Habilitationsschrift in biophysics at Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Comenius University in Bratislava. In 2002 he was appointed a Professor of physics at the same faculty.

He interrupted his scientific and pedagogical work only during political changes around 1990 when he served as a Member of the Parliament of the former Czechoslovak Federative Republic, and a Member of the Parliament of the Strasbourg European Council.

Prof. Balgavý founded the Laboratory of Biophysics at Faculty of Pharmacy. He focussed the research in this laboratory on phospholipid bilayers as models of biological membranes. Interaction of amphiphilic molecules, such as local and general anesthetics, β -blockers, sterols and different kind of biologically active surfactants with model membranes received attention in the pharmaceutical as well as biophysical society. Outstanding is his contribution to the study of “cut-off effect” in biological activities of homologous series of surfactants. Since his one-year stay at the Southampton University, he has expanded his interest to the interaction of Ca, Mg-ATPase with model membranes. In the first period, spectroscopic methods, like EPR, NMR and later also fluorescence spectroscopy, were the most suitable to study the structure and dynamics of lipid bilayers and simultaneously, suitable devices were accessible in Bratislava. Scattering and diffraction of neutrons and synchrotron radiation have been in the centre of his interest in last fifteen years, when the pos-

sibility to perform experiments in laboratories abroad has increased. His most cited papers are related to the evaluation of structural parameters of model phospholipid membranes using small-angle neutron scattering data. Prof. Balgavý is an author or a co-author of over 170 scientific papers and of two monographs, and has given many talks and invited lectures. Prof. Balgavý has been successful in receiving support from Slovak VEGA and APVV agencies for many years as well as EU grants FP6 and FP7.

The high level of international collaboration is a noticeable feature of his career. Prof. Balgavý has close friendly and working contacts with members of the wide community of scientists in the field of membrane biophysics throughout the world. He contributes to improving the access of Slovakia to top-ranking European laboratories, especially as a member of the Committee of Government Plenipotentiary for Collaboration of Slovakia and JINR Dubna, and as a member and an academic guarantor of the Ministry of Education Committee for Collaboration with XFEL in Hamburg.

Prof. Balgavý participates in organizing scientific and pedagogical activities of the Faculty of Pharmacy as a member of the Scientific board. He is also a member of several committees for PhD study at different faculties and universities in Slovakia. Valuable was his work as the Vice-Chairman of the Academic Senate of Comenius University. Prof. Balgavý was awarded the Bronze and Silver Medals of the Faculty of Pharmacy, and the Silver Medal of Comenius University.

Prof. Balgavý has always enjoyed teaching. He established Biophysics as a subject for Master students of the Faculty of

Pharmacy. In addition to lectures and seminars of biophysics, he spends a lot of time teaching laboratory exercises of physics and physical chemistry. He always encourages creative work of students. All his students complaining about strange experimental results know his guidance: "Woow, your results are very interesting....you know, the nature always gives you the right answer. Now your task is only to find out what the question was like." Many of MD and PhD students graduated under his supervision. Some of them became eminent scientists and university teachers.

This issue of the General Physiology and Biophysics journal was assembled as a Festschrift on the occasion of Professor Pavol Balgavý 65th birthday in June 2009. We asked his current or previous collaborators, students and friends whether they would be interested in contributing to the Festschrift. The response was extremely positive; nearly everyone agreed to write a contribution and submitted it, for the most part, on time. The result of our project is this collection of research papers of outstanding quality expressing, perhaps also in this way, an appreciation of Prof. Balgavý scientific work and friendship.

We would like to thank all the authors, the editor Dr. Lubica Lacinová, the entire editorial team of General Physiology and Biophysics, and the all involved referees for their work and great support.

Daniela Uhríková and Jana Gallová