In memoriam: Oleg Shishkin

Zdzislaw Latajka¹ · Leonid Gorb² · Tadeusz Marek Krygowski³

Received: 26 October 2015 / Accepted: 28 December 2015 / Published online: 16 January 2016
© Springer Science+Business Media New York 2016

More than a year has passed since Oleg Shishkin's tragic and unexpected death. Oleg was one of the most internationally respected younger generation chemists of Ukraine. Science was for Oleg the leading star that showed him the way through life. That way was not always direct. It was sometimes twisting. A craving for knowledge made Oleg more and more excited and gave him the force to work almost around the clock. His unique ability to percept something new behind well-known facts and patterns became his "distinguishing mark." He was lucky to have wonderful teachers, tutors and colleagues.

Oleg made his first steps as a scientist in Kharkiv National University. In 1990 he defended the diploma work entitled "Molecular and crystal structure of dihydroazopyrimides." Those direction—research into molecular and crystal structure of organic compounds became a source of inexhaustible cognition for him. Oleg's formation as a scientist was made possible largely due to his constant communication with his tutors, colleagues and friends from Kharkiv scientific school studying heterocyclic compounds. Sergey Desenko, Oleg's tutor during the period of

preparing the Ph.D. thesis, has become his close lifetime friend. He helped Oleg to realize his ambition to make research into the molecule structure at the Laboratory for X-ray Diffraction Studies of A.N. Nesmeyanov Institute of Organoelement Compounds of Russian Academy of Sciences founded by Yu. Struchkov. This worldwide known center became Oleg Shishkin's main scientific cradle. Professors Y. Struchkov, S. Lindeman, M. Antipin helped Oleg not only to acquire knowledge and experience of the X-ray structural analysis but also to trust his own scientific intuition. Also during his stay at A.N. Nesmeyanov Institute of Organoelement Compounds Oleg spent half a year at Nottingham University.

In 1997 Oleg got the invitation from Prof. Semnozhenko to organize and lead his own laboratory in Kharkiv Institute for Single Crystals. As a real scientist Oleg could not resist such a temptation and returned to Ukraine. He was organizing the laboratory step by step with excitement, diligence and firmness of purpose intrinsic to his personality. And it all resulted in the laboratory that joined the approaches of X-ray diffraction study and computational chemistry. In 1999 he defended the dissertation entitled "Molecular structure and conformational analysis of six-membered dihydrocycles" and obtained Dr. Sci. degree.

Scientific business trips to Jackson State University (USA) resulted in tight scientific collaboration with the Center for Molecular Structure and Interactions led by Prof. J. Leszczynski. This cooperation gave the series of outstanding publications. It also helped to formulate the final conception of the laboratory as the Ukrainian center for X-ray diffraction study and computational chemistry. This center joined experimental and theoretical approach to the molecule analysis. The peak of this joining up was the joint Biannually International Conference "*Methods and*

✉ Leonid Gorb
lgorb@icnanotox.org

Zdzislaw Latajka
zdzislaw.latajka@chem.uni.wroc.pl

Tadeusz Marek Krygowski
tmkryg@chem.uw.edu.pl

¹ Faculty of Chemistry, University of Wrocław, F. Joliot-Curie 14, 50-383 Wrocław, Poland

² Institute of Molecular Biology and Genetics, NAS Ukraine, 150 Zabolotnogo, Kiev, Ukraine

³ Faculty of Chemistry, University of Warsaw, Pasteura 1, 02-093 Warsaw, Poland

applications of computational chemistry” (MACC) organized by the Center of Professor Leszczynski and Oleg Shishkin’s laboratory. The conference became the scientific event willingly visited by the scientists making research into the stuff structure using different methods.

Oleg Shishkin was not only a gifted scientist but also a wonderful manager. He made tremendous efforts to provide development not only for the Institute for Single Crystals but for science in Ukraine in general. Analytical articles with ideas as to the ways of improving the organization of scientific activities, interviews with mass media

making recent scientific achievements popular, teaching students in his alma mater Kharkiv State University with the purpose to involve them into serious scientific research required a lot of time and force from Oleg Shishkin. But every morning began with the exciting decoding of the overnight X-ray diffraction experiment, discussing the colleagues’ quantum chemical calculations, reading of the newly published articles.

We have suffered a great loss due to his unexpected death.