



Arnīs Treimanis (1940 – 2014)

Professor Dr. ARNIS TREIMANIS died on December 18, 2014 in Riga, Latvia.

He was born on February 19th 1940 in Riga, Latvia and graduated 1963 from the Riga Technical University (RTU), Faculty of Chemical Technology. He received his PhD in 1971 and did the habilitation in wood science in 1993. Since 1998 he was professor of the Latvian University of Agriculture (LUA). Arnīs Treimanis was Full Member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences (LAS) since 2008, Fellow of the Latvian Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences since 1998, Foreign Member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences since 1994.

Apart from the Latvian University of Agriculture, his professional career was closely linked to the Latvian State Institute of Wood Chemistry (former Institute of Forestry Problems and Wood Chemistry), where he served as a senior technician (1960-1961), engineer (1961-1964, 1967-1970), research student (1964-1967), Senior Research Associate (1970-1976), Head of the Research Sector on Pulp Fibres Ultrastructure (1976-1984), Head of the Cellulose Laboratory (1984-1994), Deputy Director of Research (1984-1993), and Leading Researcher (since 1994). In the Latvian Academy of Sciences, he was acting as Chair of the Division of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences (2007-2010), Member of the Board (2008-2012), and Member of the Senate (since 2008).

The list of awards he received is long, but can still only insufficiently reflect the breadth of his activities and achievements. Among many other honors, he received acknowledgements from the Latvian Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Wood Chemistry, and the Ministry of Education and Science (2005, 2010), was nominated into the international Marcus Wallenberg Prize committee, and was included with his group into the list of Latvia's most outstanding scientific achievements. In 2013 he won the "Golden cone", the International Forestry's Annual Award.

Prof. Treimanis carried out research into many different areas of wood-related sciences: production processes of wood, cellulosic pulp, pulping and bleaching technology, pulping chemistry, chemical composition and microstructure of wood and paper, biocomposites and nanocomposites. He always attempted to accompany development of new products with a thorough analytical, chemical, physical and structural characterization. His work ethic consisted of a very accurate style of working, a fondness of fundamental research, the integration of modern and upcoming analytical techniques, and a very positive attitude towards cooperation and international collaboration.

Arnīs Treimanis was one of the Latvian key figures in promoting wood research in his country and the countries of the Baltic States. When wood research had declined in the years of the decay of the former Eastern Block, he was the one to uphold the old tradition of wood research in the Baltic States and to successfully guide the venerable wood research institutions in Latvia through those difficult times of restructuring and renewal. Never forgetting his roots in Latvia he was a truly European scientist, having worked as a collaborator in countless European projects and COST actions. He felt especially obliged to the EWLP conference series (European Workshop of Lignocellulosics and Pulp) which in 2004 he hosted with his home institution in Riga. Many of his colleagues saw this meeting as a crowning achievement of his endeavors to reintegrate Latvian wood research in the European framework and the start of a fruitful, many-faceted cooperation at the European level. These collaborations have flourished and intensified, with centers being in Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, and Austria.

Arnīs was an ardent teacher and major adviser to innumerable students and scientists, and introduced them into the science and art of wood research, scientific endeavors in general, as well as publishing and communicating with colleagues worldwide. He certainly belonged to the rare class of scientists who are not only able to produce results and convey mere knowledge, but also to shape personalities and to educate inexperienced young colleagues into responsible and dedicated scientists. There is hardly a better role model than Dr. Treimanis: he proved that scientific rigor can well go hand in hand with personal modesty, that honesty, collegiality and personal integrity is not only compatible with performing best at science, but is in fact a prerequisite to doing so. He was much more than a teacher and colleague: he was a demanding and supportive mentor, a helpful collaborator, and a selfless, caring friend at the same time. When talking about his co-workers, he always addressed them as “my friends”.

Arnīs Treimanis is succeeded by his wife of over 40 years, Rita, and their children, who live in Jūrmala.

Many of us, his former colleagues and students, are tremendously indebted to him for his scientific cooperation and guidance. By being invited to his home town for meetings or congresses or by meeting him at one of innumerable international gatherings, we were able to recognize Arnīs both as a selfless and upright colleague, scientific mentor, and a fatherly friend. He was, especially for his students and colleagues in Latvia and the Baltic countries, a key figure in their professional development and formation – he had a decisive, positive influence on the course of the scientific careers.

He surely was a protagonist in his scientific field – and most of his co-workers and colleagues will remember him as the Grand Seigneur of Latvian wood research. However – and most importantly – he was a marvelous, cordial, good-natured, and uttermost modest man. With his passing, not only the wood science community lost one of its leading figures, but his friends and former students, along with his family, are mourning the loss of a great human being. We know that Arnīs Treimanis’ scientific legacy will persist – his crowning achievements as a teacher of human qualities will live on in the hearts of his students and colleagues. We wish his family, especially his wife, much strength and faith, with a positive attitude towards the future.

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also on behalf of his countless former colleagues, co-workers, students and friends