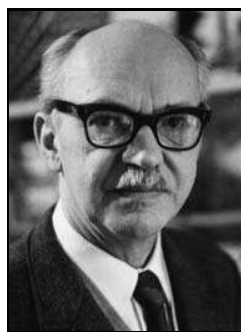


## Academician Stanek – 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Anniversary



This year we remember the birthday anniversary of the late Academician Ivan Stanek, M.D., Professor and Head of the Institute of Histology and Embryology of the Faculty of Medicine, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia.

Ivan Stanek was born on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 1915 in Záríečie near Púchov in the family of a protestant pastor. His mother (maiden name Zochová) was the granddaughter of Ctiboh Zoch, an age-mate of Ľudovít Štúr, and the sister of the renown natural scientist Professor Branislav Zoch. This family environment exerted a considerable influence on the childhood and adolescence of Ivan Stanek. Young Ivan was very keen on natural sciences already in his high-school years and this interest substantiated his decision to study medicine.

At the Faculty of Medicine in Bratislava he was particularly attracted by theoretical disciplines, such as biology, histology and embryology. This was the reason why he started to work at the Institute of Histology and Embryology, first as an auxiliary volunteer and

later as student assistant. He completed his medical studies in 1940 and shortly after the end of World War II he was assigned the Head of this Institute. He was holding this position up to his untimely death in 1972. During his activities in the Faculty of Medicine, he educated many students who became skilled specialists not only in histology and embryology, but also in other theoretical and clinical branches of medicine. In the post-war history of Slovak science, Professor Stanek excelled as a prominent creative personality. Great was his share in popular coverage of science and research, in presenting medicine to the public and in popular communication of the Slovak history of science. He was a member of many scientific societies abroad, which reflected his ramified scientific contacts.

Professor Stanek was actively involved in several academic functions at the Faculty. Thanks to his endeavour, the construction of the New Theoretical Institutes in Sasinkova Street in Bratislava became materialized. He participated also in the foundation of the biological institutes of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. In 1955 he was nominated Academician of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and in the 60s he became Corresponding Member of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts. Within the frame of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Stanek established the Laboratory of Experimental Cytology, and for several years he headed it. It was here that he introduced the method of “tissue culture *in vitro*”, a new method at that time. He published a great number of original scientific papers concerning his studies of life processes of cells (cultured *in vitro*) from normal and pathologically altered nervous tissue.

He achieved his greatest international success, in cooperation with co-workers, by micro-cinematographic monitoring of life processes of cells. The title of this original film was *Macrophages in CNS cultures*.

Professor Stanek was also an outstanding teacher. He became famous for his clear, readily understandable and exciting lectures on human embryology. He was the author of several teaching materials from histology and embryology. His first state-wide (Czechoslovakia) textbook *Human Embryology* was greatly recognized, published in several editions, and also translated into Russian.

In addition to his scientific and teaching activities, Professor Stanek was an enthusiastic member of editorial boards of several scientific journals at home and abroad. He was Editor-in-Chief of the journals *Biologia, Bratislava* and *Bratislava Medical Letters*.

In each of the above mentioned areas, the activities of Professor Stanek represented a considerable contribution. In spite of attaining an important social position and recognition of his achievements, Professor Stanek remained a modest man. Courtesy, tolerance, broad vision and wisdom belonged among his personal characteristics. He was and he remained a pattern of an excellent university teacher, scientist and doctor of medicine.

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