

# OBITUARY

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## In memoriam Professor Kubelka

Prof. Ing. Dr. *Václav Kubelka*, DrSc., Corresponding Member of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, died on January 21, 1977 at the age of 85. In him we have lost a man who devoted all his life to education of young people at the Technical Universities in Brno and Bratislava, and an outstanding specialist in the field of leather technology and in the field of purification of industrial waste waters.

Professor Kubelka was born in Uherské Hradiště on January 11, 1892. In 1913 he graduated from the Czech Technical University in Prague, specialization of chemistry, and started his professional career as an assistant in the Institute of Inorganic Chemistry at the Technical University in Brno where in 1915 he obtained the degree of Doctor of Technical Sciences. In 1920 he was appointed Extraordinary, and in 1927 Ordinary Professor for the field of animal and plant tissues at the Technical University in Brno. He remained there till 1951 and after the Technical University of Brno was closed, the Slovak Technical University of Bratislava became his second "alma mater" where he held the position of professor from 1951 to 1962.

At the age of 70 he was emerited.

After the World War I, Professor Kubelka founded within the Technical University of Brno a Department of Chemistry and Technology of Leather and a Research Institute for the Leather Industry. In his life he succeeded in reconciling the duties of a teacher with the scientific research activities within the Research Institute where, apart from giving the technologists their professional training, the scientific research into chemistry and technology of leather was performed. The professional level of the Institute was recognized and appreciated both in our country and abroad.

The manifold activities of Professor Kubelka may be divided into three main groups: the scientific research work, pedagogical work and professional organizing work.

The research activities of Professor Kubelka concentrated on research into the physicochemical properties of collagen, into methods for analysis and evaluation of vegetable tanning material and enzymatic mordants, and into methods for estimation of physicochemical properties of leather.

Very important are Professor Kubelka's works on chemistry and technology of water. His vast and thorough studies on purification of industrial waste waters have been of greatest importance for the Czechoslovak water economics.

His extensive experimental work found its expression in his numerous publications. He authored about 180 original papers and articles. He is founder of Czechoslovak professional literature in the field of leather technology. He founded and edited the journal *Technická hlídka koželužská* (Technical Reviews in Leather Technology) and he is also the author of a large monograph on chemistry and technology of leather which appeared in 8 volumes with total extent of 3600 pages.

His professional organizing activities were numerous and very valuable. He was Dean and Rector of the Technical University of Brno, he initiated founding of the Czechoslovak

Association of Leather Chemists and he was its President for many years. His activities were not limited to the national scale, he contributed to the organization of a world-wide professional life of leather chemists within the International Union of Leather Chemists' Societies. He was member and dignitary of many scientific and technical societies. He was also a very active member of the Czechoslovak Chemical Society and of the Slovak Chemical Society.

For his scientific work he was honoured by the title "Laureate of the State Prize" which he was first to receive for merits in technical sciences.

The last years of his active professional life Professor Kubelka spent at the Slovak Technical University in Bratislava. As an appreciation of his professional qualities in 1954 he was named Corresponding Member of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, in 1955 he received the degree of Doctor of Sciences at the Faculty of Chemical Engineering of the Slovak Technical University, on the occasion of his 80th birthday he was awarded the Golden Medal of the Slovak Technical University, and on the occasion of his 85th birthday the Medal of D. Štúr of the Slovak Academy of Sciences for his merits in fostering the development of natural sciences.

As University teacher Professor Kubelka educated several generations of chemical engineers and chemists who have been working as scientists, researchers in various Czechoslovak research institutes, as chemical engineers in industry or as teachers at Czechoslovak Universities.

He was known as an excellent teacher and an exceptionally good lecturer. He had a pleasant straightforward character, he enjoyed a vivid discussion, remained friendly even when firmly fighting against some deficiencies.

His general attitude towards life, work and society was that of a warm and active interest.

With Professor Kubelka the last of the post-war group of brilliant Professors from the Technical University of Brno has left us. His name will be living in his pupils and in his work which he has created and which testifies his erudition, his gifts and, his exemplary industry.

*A. Blažej*