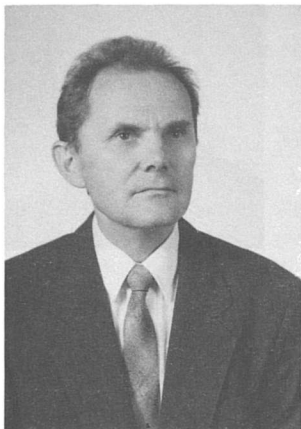


The 60th Anniversary of Professor RNDr. Štefan Toma, DrSc.



Perhaps unbelievable but yet real – this young-looking man highly enthusiastic and full of new ideas, organizer of many activities in organic chemistry, functionary proving his deep concern in public affairs, especially in education and training of students, head of the Department of Organic Chemistry, Comenius University in Bratislava – celebrates his sixtieth anniversary.

Professor Š. Toma was born on September 11, 1937 in Velké Uherce as son of a farmer. He began his university studies in chemistry at the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the above-mentioned university in 1955 and graduated with distinction in 1960. He started his career as an assistant and later on as a lecturer at this department. His dissertation concerning the chemistry of ferrocene was supervised by Professor Mikuláš Furdík. This project, further studied in more detail and constituting his Ph.D. thesis, resulted in a new synthetic method for preparation of [5]-ferrocenophane-1,5-dione derivatives. The organometallic chemistry remained the main topic of Professor Toma for many coming years. In 1969 he was appointed lecturer after presenting his thesis on the reactivity comparison (electrophilic substitutions) of ferrocene with five-membered heterocycles. Intramolecular Michael addition, a method to produce $[m]$ metallocenophanes – constituted his DrSc. thesis in 1982. In 1984 he was appointed professor of organic chemistry and since 1976 he has been heading this department up to date. In this position Professor Toma demonstrated his abilities to organize scientific projects and education perhaps as a result of his deep interest in university events: he was active as a vice-dean (1981–1986) and dean (1986–1991) of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University. He also acted as secretary for science (1972–1988) and president of the Slovak Chemical Society affiliated to the Slovak Academy of Sciences (1988–1990). As academic official he tried to cooperate with foreign chemical societies and took part in organizing annual workshops “Advances in Organic Chemistry” held in the House of Scientists in Smolenice; he also lobbied for participation of foreign and domestic specialists in this event. By the way, up to 1990 it was somehow problematic to ensure participation of top world chemists from the western hemisphere. Anyway, his personal contacts with them entitled him to invite them to present their newest results in our country.

Professor Toma intensified stepwise his interests from the chemistry of ferrocene also to further fields of organometallic chemistry certainly due to stays abroad. Thus, he worked as a postdoc at the Straclyde University in Glasgow in 1970–1971 working for Professor Pauson. Two months each in 1989 and 1992 he was invited as professor on sabbatical leave to Joseph Fourier University, Grenoble I and Université Sciences et Techniques de Lille Flandres-Artois, Villeneuve d'Ascq, respectively. He cooperated with Professor Jean Louis Luche in sonochemistry at the first-mentioned university and with Professor Brocard in the field of chromium complexes at the latter one. Professor Toma was further invited to the USA in 1994 by Professor Mark Welker of the Wake Forest University as a senior quest scientist (NSF-NATO) and twice to France in 1995. In the position of a professor on sabbatical leave he lectured a course on organometallic chemistry at the École Européenne des Hautes Études des Industries Chimiques de Strasbourg (Professor Arlette Soladie-Cavallo) and on organotitanium(IV) complexes at the Université de Bourgundy, Dijon (Professor Bernard Gautheron). The field of Professor Toma's activities extending to complexes of dienes with tricarbonyliron, cobaltocene, to exploitation of inorganic carriers in organic syntheses, and recently also to sonochemistry and arene complexes with tricarbonylchromium was stimulated certainly by these stays. Elaboration of a new, preparatively very valuable method for the synthesis of arenechromiumtricarbonyl compounds was his contribution to this class of chemistry.

Professor Toma published 140 original papers cited more than 700 times with a little group of coworkers and Ph.D. students. His scientific, pedagogic, and organizational activities were evaluated in our country and abroad; e.g. he was awarded the Golden Medals of Comenius University, Faculty of Natural Sciences of the same University, and Slovak Chemical Society, Hanuš Medal of the Czechoslovak Chemical Society. Since 1991 he is a member of the COST-directing committee – action D 6, national delegate to the COST-chemistry technical committee representing the Slovak Republic (formerly Czechoslovakia). He is a member of Editorial Board of a new international scientific journal – *Applied Organometallic Chemistry*.

It would be, however, proper to complement this characterization of Professor Toma by further activities from another viewpoint and present him as a skillful experimentalist at a lab bench, at teaching, in social life or as a loving husband. As far as I know him, he would decline this approach with thanks.

Allow me then, dear Steve, to wish you in the names of senior and junior colleagues, friends, coworkers, PhD. and undergraduate students much health, good cheer in private life and business, and many original ideas at the occasion of your anniversary. Optimism and enthusiasm be your true companions in life.

P. Hrnčiar