

# Professor Štípek – Sixty Five Years

**Borovanský J.**

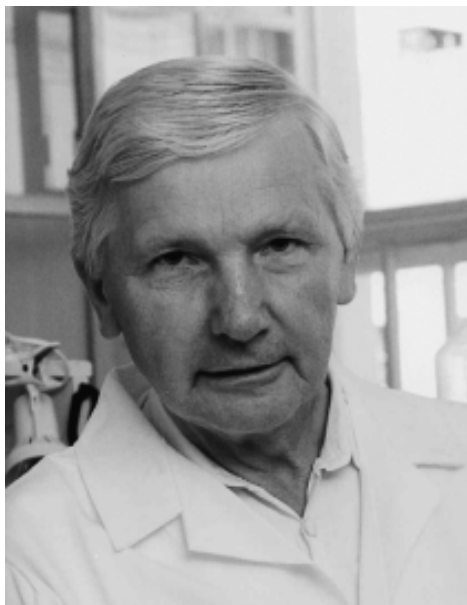
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On 24<sup>th</sup> November 2006 Professor Stanislav Štípek, MD., DSc. reached an important life jubilee. He was born in Poličany, in the district of Kutná Hora, into the family of a butcher, who later became a stoker and engine driver. From his parents S.Štípek inherited affability, a quiet even-tempered mind, industry, assiduity, patience and love for his native region and nature. He attended both the primary and secondary school in Kutná Hora where he found plenty of good friends and in 1964 his wife Zdena as well.

In 1958 he was enrolled at the Faculty of General Medicine (FGM – today the First Faculty of Medicine), Charles University in Prague. In the beginning of the first winter term he was asked by doctor Večerek, his teacher of the practical class, to help and to explain the practical subject to Pohan Zulkifli Alias Kiviel, who was standing next to him and who as a student from Indonesia understandably had initial problems with specialized Czech expressions. Hence, we can say that three weeks after the admission to Charles University, S. Štípek launched his university pedagogical career, which is still continuing today. In 1958–1961 he worked as a junior assistant, 1961–1963 as an auxiliary assistant at the First Department of Medical and Forensic Chemistry FGM, and together with his colleague Jan Štěpán he started his scientific activities under guidance and supervision of dr. B. Večerek. In 1963, i. e. a year before completion of his medical studies, when it became apparent that there would be no vacant posts for graduates, S. Štípek transferred his research activity to the Institute of Experimental Biology and Genetics of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, where he started experiments for his PhD. Thesis in the group of the famous Professor Milan Hašek, MD. Compulsory



*Figure 1 – Professor Stanislav Štípek, MD., DSc., in his laboratory.*

military service (1965–1966) then interrupted his research work. Having passed it, he returned to the Academy of Sciences and as a PhD. student under the guidance of another great man of science, Juraj Ivanyi, MSc., he completed and in 1969 defended his Thesis “The Effect of Immunization on the Metabolism of Ribonucleic Acids in the Spleen”. After another year spent at the Academy as a research fellow dr. Štípek returned to his mother medical faculty.

With great enthusiasm he plunged into pedagogical work (practical classes, seminars, lectures in medical chemistry, biochemistry, pathobiochemistry and toxicology) which he wedded to experimental scientific activity. His efforts resulted in the defence of habilitation Thesis “Regulatory Factors of Ribonucleic Acid Metabolism in the Rat Brain” (1979). In 1983 Associated Professor Štípek obtained a postgraduate certificate in clinical biochemistry and in 1988 he became a forensic expert in toxicology of the Ministry of Justice. In 1989 he defended DSc. Thesis “The Importance of Purine Metabolites in the Pathogenesis and Diagnostics of Hypoxic Damage of the Organism” and in 1990 was promoted into professorship.

From the beginning of the 1990s Professor Štípek has concentrated his research interest on the area of free radicals. Signal function of radicals fascinated him particularly. He has participated both in the grants of Internal Grant Agency of Ministry of Health (“Perinatal Development of Antioxidant Enzyme System in Man and Its Errors”; “The Role of Free Radicals in the Origin and Progression of Preeclampsy”; “Cyclosporine A Nephrotoxicity in Patients with Autoimmune Diseases: Early Diagnosis and Monitoring”; “Oxidative Stress and Pathogenesis of Renal Diseases) and in the grants of the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic (“Oxidases Producing Reactive Oxygen Species and Their Significance for the Damage of the Anterior Eye Segment”; “Localization, Distribution and Function of Glutamate Receptor in the Brain Capillary Barrier”; “Reactive Oxygen Species and Antioxidant Defence of the Eye. Causes of the Oxidative Damage, Its Prevention and Treatment”). During research he trained many young collaborators. Let me mention Professor Tomáš Zima, MD., DSc. (at present the dean of our faculty), Jan Pláteník, MD., PhD. and Martin Vejražka, MD. Under the leadership of prof Štípek the Department of Medical Biochemistry of the First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University has become a distinguished center of free radical research in the Czech Republic.

So what makes prof. Stanislav Štípek unique?

1. The absolute preoccupation of prof. Štípek with his sphere of action and his continuous effort for its modernization. He delivers lectures with such enthusiasm, that even students who came just to have a rest in a warm lecture-room, pay attention.

2. His ability to plan his everyday working program, to adhere to it and to harness time effectively. It enables him, regardless of his time-consuming functions as head of the Department of Medical Biochemistry (1984–1990, 1998–up to now)

and as first Vicedean of our Medical Faculty (since 1999), to be fully involved in pedagogical and scientific activities like his colleagues. His day begins in the early hours when the majority of teachers only approach the climax of their sleeping cycle.

3. His great modesty. Only a few people from both the field of biochemistry and from the Medical Faculty know that prof Štípek belongs to the founders of a bachelor study program of the EU in biotechnology guaranteed by a consortium of ten European universities and run since 2002 in Perugia, Italy. Prof Štípek with his associates are responsible for teaching biochemistry. In the world frame, prof Štípek acts as a biochemical expert in the project Petra II – Alpha, which is an electrochemical and electrophysical expert program for the cooperation between Romance countries of the EU and universities in Latin America.

4. His manual and design skill. Professor Štípek is recognized as a full-value worker by his former classmates, now craftsmen in Církvice (district Kutná Hora), where as a joiner and designer he built i.e. a remarkable and modern staircase. Thanks to his agricultural activities his extended family is self-sufficient in potato and vegetable consumption, and as for his courgettes they are second to none.

5. His love for his native region. Everybody who has had a chance like me to be guided around Kutná Hora, Církvice, Jakub, Sedlec, Kačina and the archeological finding place Bylany, will agree with me.

Let me wish Standa plenty of health and pleasure in his university, personal and family life!