GUNARS CHIPENS
(To his seventy-fifth anniversary)

Our colleague, former member of the Editorial Board of our journal, full member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, and leading research worker at the Institute of Organic Synthesis, is celebrating his 75th jubilee.

Since leaving the chemistry faculty of Latvian State University in 1958 he has worked at the Institute of Organic Synthesis, Academy of Sciences of the Latvian SSR (now the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis).

In 1963 G. Chipens defended a Thesis for Candidate of chemical sciences on "Investigation in the series of aminotriazoles and acylaminotriazoles". He studied not only methods of synthesis and the physical and chemical properties of the new compounds but also their antitubercular activity. Unfortunately, this direction of investigation was not continued since at that time the tuberculosis problem was considered solved.

In 1964 G. Chipens headed the newly created laboratory of amino acids and peptides. After a short period the young supervisor became an expert in this complex region of science and attracted young people to the work. Under his supervision 25 candidate's theses were defended, and he was tutor to many prospective doctors of science.

The main directions of G. Chipens' scientific work were investigation of the structure–functional organization and mechanism of the action of peptide–protein bioregulators (hormones, kinins, neuropeptides, growth factors, cell differentiation, etc.), a search for biologically active fragments in the molecules of interferons, immunoglobulins and other proteins of the immune system, and study of the basic principles of biogenesis and the mechanism of the action of low-molecular peptide immunoregulators.

In 1973 G. Chipens defended a Doctoral Thesis on "Synthesis and investigation of the structural and functional arrangement of some peptide hormones and kinins".

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In 1975-1982 G. Chipens was director of the Institute of Organic Synthesis. The Institute, which was initially directed toward classical organic synthesis, changed to a scientific center of bioorganic chemistry with worldwide renown. Investigations of peptides, nucleic acids, and prostaglandins in the field of molecular biochemistry also became the leading topic on the Institute's agenda.

Gunars Chipens devoted much effort and energy to scientific management and teaching activity. He was member of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Latvian SSR and chairman of the Scientific Council of the State Committee of Science and Technology of the USSR on "Chemistry and technology of organic compounds of sulfur", and member of five all-union scientific councils and commissions, supervised the program on peptide-protein bioregulators, lectured at Riga Polytechnical University, Latvian State University, and the University of Brussels, and was chairman of the organizing committee of numerous symposia and conferences. After leaving the post of director Prof. Chipens continued to supervise the department of peptide–protein bioregulators. Chemists, biologists, and specialists in theoretical conformational analysis worked under his supervision. The department collaborated actively with many other scientific centers.

In spite of his great involvement in scientific-management activities G. Chipens was always and still remains a generator of novel ideas with boundless devotion to science, a workaholic in the best sense of the word. He is one of the most often cited scientists of Latvia, author not only of scientific publications, monographs, and articles, but also the holder of patents and inventor's certificates. Moreover, he has been able to combine the investigation of structure–function organization of peptides with the development of the technology and the assimilation of medicinal products into industry. *Angiotensin*, *pentagastrin*, *thyroliberin*, *deaminooxytocin*, and *oxytocin* were produced at the Experimental Plant of the Institute of Organic Synthesis (now the Grindeks company), and *oxytocin* is currently in production. The technology was also developed for the production of certain modified amino acids and also the antihypertensive product *enalapril*.

A concise listing of Prof. G. Chipens' achievements and awards can be found in: *Khim. Geterotsikl. Soedin.*, 1593 (2003); *Khim. Geterotsikl. Soedin.*, No. 2 (2007); on the Latvian Academy of Sciences site (see also: *Academician, Latvian Academy of Sciences, G. I. Chipens. Bibliography* [in Russian], Latvian Academic Library, 1993, 195 pp.).

At present G. Chipens is largely engaged in the theoretical aspects of molecular biology and genetics. He has put forward a hypothesis about the existence of a so far unknown second genetic code, and attempts are being made to explain the origin of genes and introns.

The editorial staff of the journal wish the esteemed birthday celebrant many more years of creative enthusiasm, indefatigability in the attainment of his objectives, robust health, and happiness.