

In Memoriam: Dr. Jan Slavík

The 31st of January, 1999, marked the passing-away of Dr. Jan Slavík, a young Czech biophysicist who devoted his entire scientific life to fluorescence techniques, ranging from measuring intracellular pH and membrane potential to fluorescence imaging of different types of cells.

He was born on 15 December 1951 in Prague, then the capital of Czechoslovakia, now of the Czech Republic, and went to school there until 1968. Then he accompanied his parents to the United States, where he spent a year at a high school in Durham, NC.

After his return he studied at the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics of Charles University, where he graduated in 1975 and where he received his Ph.D. in biophysics in 1981. In 1980 Jan Slavík took his first job at the Institute of Microbiology of the then Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, to move to the Institute of Physiology in 1985. His papers from that period concentrated on analyses of the intracellular pH of yeast cells, where he introduced the dual-excitation technique (which, during the most recent period, was supplemented with the dual-emission technique), using fluorescein and carboxy-fluorescein for that purpose. Then he extended his studies

to other fungal cells and various animal, including human, cells and made use of the confocal fluorescence microscopy.

Dr. Slavík is the author of about 50 primary publications and of 2 books (*Intracellular pH and Its Measurement*, with A. Kotyk, CRC Press, 1989; *Fluorescent Probes in Biology and Medicine*, CRC Press, 1994). He traveled extensively and lectured at some 20 European and American universities and research institutes. Well known and appreciated is his organizational work—he was chairman and chief organizer of the Third Conference on Applied Fluorescence Microscopy in 1993 and two conferences on Fluorescence Microscopy and Fluorescent Probes in 1995 and 1997, all held in Prague. In the midst of organizing the third conference he was struck dead in his hotel room in San Francisco, following his attendance at a meeting in San Jose.

He leaves behind his wife Eva, a medical doctor, and a 14-year-old son Peter, whom he loved very much.

(The Third Conference on Fluorescence Microscopy and Fluorescent Probes will be held as planned on June 20–24, 1999, in Prague and will be dedicated to his memory.)

Arnost Kotyk



Jan Slavík, 1951–1999