

Prof. Mira Vurnik-Žumer, M.D., Ph.D. (1916-1998)



Professor Mira Vurnik-Žumer, a prominent radiologist and teacher of several generations of medical students and radiologists in Slovenia, died on August 8, 1998 at the age of 82 years.

Professor Mira Vurnik-Žumer was born in Vienna on September 28, 1916. She completed her pre-university education in Ljubljana, and graduated in 1935. She pursued her study of medicine at the Faculties of Medicine in Ljubljana and in Zagreb, and graduated M.D. from the latter in April 1942. She did her pre-registration year in the Ljubljana General Hospital, and worked as a volunteer physician at the Department of Internal Medicine for two years.

She entered the specialist training in radiology quite early, and in 1950 began to work at the Institute of Radiology in Ljubljana. She passed the final speciality examination in

June 1954. After presenting her work on the modern classification of primary bone tumours she was appointed Teaching Assistant of Radiology at the Faculty of Medicine in Ljubljana on June 6, 1956. She was the first woman to occupy this position in the history of Slovene radiology. In 1965 she defended her thesis "Diagnosis of gastric carcinoma" and was advanced to the rank of Assistant Professor. In 1973 she maintained her doctor's thesis entitled "Cine- and radiographic studies of the gastroesophageal region in the diagnosis of hiatus hernia in adults". The status of Associate Professor of Radiology was conferred on her one year later. Her teaching activities involved lectures, tutorials and seminars for medical and dental students. She was also a member of the board of examiners conducting final speciality examinations. Since 1955 she held a teaching post at the College for Radiographers Assistants in Ljubljana.

She took an active part in numerous meetings of the Slovene Section of Radiology and Nuclear Medicine, as well as in many postgraduate courses of surgery, postgraduate seminars for dental surgeons, gastroenterology symposiums, the Tavčar Days postgraduate courses, Slovene-Croatian intersectional meetings and congresses of Yugoslav radiologists.

In recognition of her contributions made to the field of radiology, Professor Vurnik-Žumer was elected President of the Slovene Section of Radiology and Nuclear Medicine for the periods 1956-1957 and 1962-1964.

Her hospital appointments included a post of the supervising physician at the radiological out-patient unit of the Institute of Radio-

logy in Ljubljana and that of the chief of the Institute's service of gastroenterologic radiology (both since 1966). In addition, she provided radiological services for the Izola and Trbovlje general hospitals.

Her chief areas of interest included radiological diagnosis of skull pathologies, musculoskeletal conditions - particularly of bone tumours, and intraabdominal pathological processes. During the second part of her career, Professor Vurnik-Žumer devoted most of her time and energy to the radiological diagnosis of gastroenterological diseases, paving the way for this new subspecialty.

She introduced two important diagnostic methods - conventional tomography of the skull and hypotonic duodenography - in the routine radiological practice in Slovenia.

Professor Vurnik-Žumer published a number of papers about the above mentioned topics, most of them dealing with radiological diagnosis of the digestive system.

Her lectures on the "Radiology of the Digestive System" published in 1976, were an indispensable manual for medical undergraduates for many years. This text, together with contributions by other faculty teachers, served as the basis for the first textbook of radiology in the Slovene language.

She retired in 1976.

Professor Vurnik-Žumer will always be remembered as an outstanding teacher by many generations of medical and dental students, radiological engineers and postgraduate trainees. She pioneered modern radiological diagnosis of gastroenterologic disorders, and was one of the founders of the Ljubljana Institute of Radiology as we know it today. She has set a fine example to us all, and the outstanding contribution she made to the Slovene radiology will never be forgotten.

Vladimir Jevtič