

# Necrology

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Professor **MLADEN ŠLAJ**  
(July 17, 1957 – January 17, 2020)

Prof. dr. sc. Mladen Šljaj passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on January 17, 2020. In disbelief, we discovered we have lost our teacher, mentor, friend, a dedicated professional, a human being that has dedicated his whole life to orthodontics.

Mladen Šljaj was born on July 17, 1957 in Zagreb, where he finished primary school and the gymnasium in 1976, enrolling the School of Dental Medicine in the same year. He graduated in 1981 and since 1984 was working in the Department of Orthodontics at the School of Dental Medicine University of Zagreb, first as a scientific intern, and later as a young scholar. He defended his PhD thesis in 1986. He was elected to senior scientific collaborator in 1994 and to a post of an associate professor in 1996. He was elected full professor in 2001 and was confirmed to the post in 2006.

Since 2003 he has been head of the Department of Orthodontics and head of the Clinical department of Orthodontics of the Dental Clinic of the Clinical Hospital Center Zagreb. He was the leader and creator of the postgraduate course in orthodontics, mentor of numerous colleagues and president of the Committee for postgraduate education and examination of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Croatia. He served as a Vice-dean of the School of Dental Medicine from 2003 until 2007.

He was the president of the Croatian Orthodontic Society for a number of terms, and a founding member of the Croatian Society for Dental Traumatology, member of the Croatian Society for Medical and Biological Technics, European Orthodontic Society, International College of Dentists, American Association of Orthodontics, World Federation of Orthodontists, Foederatio Europea Orthodontica and International Teachers Forum.

He was elected as ambassador of the American Association of Orthodontics, the only member from South-eastern Europe, for the "global contribution in the development of orthodontics and dentofacial orthopaedics".

He left a rich professional and scientific heritage. He mentored over 40 graduating theses, 9 master theses, and 5 PhD theses. He authored over 100 scientific and professional publications.

He was the nestor of Croatian orthodontics. He had a vision and he had plans, the ones that were, unfortunately, not brought to fruition. His copious energy and rich experience has guided the Department. He brought up generations of students and specialists, he enriched and developed the teachings; he read a lot and researched, because of his unquenched thirst for newest trends in dentistry, not only in orthodontics.

His contribution to the profession is unmeasurable; it has led the orthodontics to become the most wanted part of dentistry. His exceptional manual skills and simple yet efficient approach to clinical cases were a reflex of his vast experience and competence; he and it will be sadly missed in the clinical work.

As a competent organizer of numerous courses and professional meetings, he brought some of the most known speakers in the world of orthodontics today to Croatia; many of them were his friends.

He was eloquent, filled with contagious energy, curiosity and vital optimism that will be remembered forever.

Dear professor, rest in peace.

Prof. dr. sc. **MLADEN ŠLAJ**  
(17. 7. 1957. – 17. 1. 2020.)



Prof. dr. sc. Mladen Šljaj napustio nas je iznenada 17. siječnja 2020. godine. U nevjerici smo doznali da smo izgubili učitelja, mentora, prijatelja, predanog nastavnika i stručnjaka, čovjeka koji je cijeli svoj radni vijek posvetio ortodontiji.

Mladen Šljaj rođen je 17. srpnja 1957. godine u Zagrebu, gdje je završio osnovnu školu i gimnaziju 1976. godine. Iste se godine upisao na Stomatološki fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu gdje diplomirao 1981. Od 1984. zaposlen je u Zavodu za ortodontiju Stomatološkog fakulteta, najprije kao znanstveni pripravnik, a zatim kao mladi istraživač. Doktorsku disertaciju obranio je 1986. U znanstveno-istraživačko zvanje viši znanstveni suradnik izabran je 1994., a izvanredni profesor postaje 1996. godine. Za redovitog profesora izabran je 2001., a redoviti profesor u trajnom zvanju postaje 2006.

Predstojnik Zavoda za ortodontiju te pročelnik Kliničkoga zavoda za ortodontiju Klinike za stomatologiju KBC-a Zagreb postaje 2003. Bio je voditelj i kreator programa specijalizacije iz ortodontije, mentor mnogobrojnim specijalizantima i predsjednik Povjerenstva za specijalističke ispite Ministarstva zdravstva RH. Od 2003. do 2007. obavljao je dužnost prodekana Stomatološkog fakulteta.

Bio je predsjednik Hrvatskoga ortodontskog društva u nekoliko mandata te član i osnivač Hrvatskoga društva za dentalnu traumatologiju, član Hrvatskoga društva za medicinsku i biološku tehniku te međunarodnih udruga European Orthodontic Society, International College of Dentists, American Association of Orthodontics, World Federation of Orthodontists, Foederatio Europea Orthodontica i International Teachers Forum.

Izabran je za ambasadora Američke udruge ortodonta (American Association of Orthodontics) kao jedini iz jugoistočne Europe zbog, kako je istaknuto, globalnog doprinosa razvoju ortodontije i dentofacijalne ortopedije.

Njegov doprinos stručnoj i znanstvenoj djelatnosti bio je golem. Pod njegovim mentorstvom obranjeno je više od 40 diplomskih radova, 9 magistrskih radova, 5 doktorskih disertacija. Autor je više od 100 znanstvenih i stručnih radova.

Bio je velikan hrvatske ortodontije. Imao je viziju i planove koje nažalost nije u cijelosti uspio ostvariti. Zahvaljujući bogatom iskustvu zavod je vodio uspješno i nepresušnom energijom. Odgojio je generacije studenata i specijalista, unaprijedio je i osuvremenio nastavu, mnogo je čitao i istraživao jer je uvijek želio biti ukorak s najnovijim trendovima, ne samo u ortodontiji nego i u stomatologiji općenito.

Dao je velik doprinos razvoju struke koja je, zahvaljujući njegovu zalaganju i entuzijazmu, postala najpoželjnija specijalizacija. Iznimna manualna vještina te jednostavan i učinkovit pristup rješavanju kliničkih slučajeva bili su odraz njegova golemog iskustva i kompetencije, te će itekako nedostajati u radu ambulanata.

Kao vrstan organizator mnogobrojnih tečajeva i stručnih skupova, u Hrvatsku je doveo neke svjetski najpoznatije stručnjake iz ortodontije s kojima je često bio i prijatelj.

Bio je elokventan, pun zarazne energije, znatiželje i životnog optimizma koji ćemo zauvijek pamtili.

Dragi naš profesore, počivaj u miru!

Marina Lapter Varga