Associate Professor Jarmila Jelínková MSc, PhD passed away

Jarmila Jelínková (13/12/1928 – 3/6/2019)

The ESCMID Family was saddened to learn of the passing of Jarmila Jelínková, a long-time ESCMID partner and collaborator. Jarmila Jelínková joined ESCMID in 1986, and attended her first ECCMID a year later. Since then she attended the meeting regularly and found it a valuable improvement that ECCMID changed from being biennial to an annual meeting. As Congress President she organized 14th ECCMID which was held in April 2004 in Prague, Czech Republic. 14th ECCMID attracted more than 5,500 attendees who submitted 2,644 abstracts, record at the time.

Jarmila was always very keen to involve young scientists from new member states and the Czech Republic in the ECCMID program as well as educational ESCMID activities. She was very enthusiastic about incorporating microbiologists within the broader context of allied health teams in infection, as well as promoting the inclusion of Gram-positive cocci such as beta-haemolytic streptococci into the programmes of meetings such as ECCMID.

These continued contributions led to Jarmila being awarded the honorary title of ESCMID Fellow (FESCMID) at ECCMID 2017 in Vienna.

Jarmila Jelínková worked in a laboratory for streptococci at the Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology in Prague, which was later appointed as the National Reference Laboratory for Streptococci and the WHO Collaborating Center for Streptococci. She was involved in laboratory diagnostics of streptococcal infections and taxonomy of streptococci and enterococci. She defended her Ph.D. thesis in 1966 and was appointed as associate professor at the 2nd Medical Faculty of Charles University in 1990. She was an author of more than 150 publications and was a member of editorial boards of journals in the Czech Republic and abroad.

Her pedagogical work was very important. In 1961 she started working at the Department of Medical Microbiology of the Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and since 1987 she has been the head of this Department until 2005. She has raised several generations of microbiologists.

She also served as President of the Czech Society for Epidemiology and Microbiology of the Czech Medical Association of J. E. Purkyně from 1998 to 2007 and was then an honorary member of the Executive Committee until her last days. She received many awards for her contribution to the development of Czech and Slovak microbiology: the František Patočka Medal of the Czechoslovak Society for Microbiology (2004), the Stanislav Prowazek Medal of the Slovak Clinical Microbiology Society (2006), the Gold Commemorative Medal of the Czech Medical Association of J. E. Purkyně (2013) and Diploma of Honorary Membership of the Society of Microbiological Laboratory Technicians (2017).

Jarmila was an amazing woman with incredible inner strength. Despite a difficult life in some periods, she did not lose her positive energy. In 2005 she took care of her hospitalized daughter Martina every day for several months. When Martina died after a severe illness, Jarmila started taking care of three teenage grandchildren Jitka, Helena and Pavel. She was happy that she could also live with her great-grandchildren.

Jarmila Jelínková passed away on 3 June 2019.