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## In memoriam

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### **Pranas Buckus**

(March 17, 1928 – December 6, 2001)

Pranas Buckus was born in Varėna district, Uzperkasis village on the 17th of March 1928. In 1947, as an external student of Vilnius University (VU), he finished the Vilnius secondary school for adults.

In 1950 P. Buckus graduated from the Faculty of Chemistry of VU. In 1950–1954 he was a post-graduate student of the Department of Organic Chemistry of Moscow Lomonosov University. His thesis for a candidate degree “Cyoanoethylation of  $\alpha$ -amino acids and their derivatives” prepared under the guidance of Acad. A. Terentjev was defended in 1954. In 1954–1963 P. Buckus worked at the Faculty of Chemistry of VU, first as a senior lecturer and since 1959 as Associate Professor. In 1963–1987 he was Prorector for study affairs of Vilnius Pedagogical Institute (VPI), in 1987–1990 Head of the Department of Chemistry, from 1990 to 1994 Professor of VPI. His doctoral thesis “Investigation of cyanoethylation, decyanoethylation, recyanoethylation” was defended in 1967. Pranas Buckus was an

honoured scientist, member of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the USSR, and academician (1967–1990).

Prof. Pranas Buckus was awarded the IV class Order of Grand Duke Gediminas for his great contribution to science popularization.

Professor P. Buckus worked a lot himself and induced others. When he worked as Prorector for study affairs, for 24 years his duty had been not only to organize the work, but also to keep relations with other scientific and education institutions and foreign universities. He was very busy, but he was always considerate to people. Though making documents for sending students to study and giving degrees to lecturers required a lot of time, he did everything by himself, having only one assistant. He was always in a hurry to perform his direct duties.

Prof. P. Buckus' scientific work was extensive and variegated. He published over 100 scientific papers, supervised the research work of young scientists. From 1953 to 1979 over 80 papers in organic chemistry were published in the journals “Bendroji chemija” and “Organine chemija”, in the scientific reports and in the scientific works of the higher education institutions. Prof. P. Buckus delivered lectures on organic chemistry and history of chemistry, prepared and published methodological material for chemistry teachers and students: “A Textbook in Organic Chemistry” (1975, in Russian, second edition, revised, 1985, in Russian); “A Reader in Organic Chemistry”, 1994. He was interested in history of chemistry and devoted over 20 papers to this subject.

Prof. P. Buckus was not only a chemist, but also a man of letters. He wrote popular science papers and papers on chemistry didactics and pedagogics: “The works of Lithuanian organic chemists”, “The first steps of the Lithuanian University”, “Chemists of the old Vilnius University”, “Lithuanian teachers as scientists”, “The honourable profession of teacher”, “Nomenclature of organic compounds”, “On the Lithuanian chemistry terminology”, “Scientific dynasties in Lithuania”, “Nobel prizes”, “Fragrant substances”, “Chemistry of life”, “Chemistry and nature”, “In the world of colours”, “Chemistry of medicines”. All these papers were topical and interesting

for the general public. His works were published in the journals “Mokslas ir gyvenimas”, “Mokslas ir technika”, “Gimtoji kalba”, and in the newspaper “Mokslo Lietuva”. In the journal “Khimija v shkole” Prof. P. Buckus published over 20 interesting papers which were valuable not only for chemistry teachers: “Chemists with the same name”, “They were not only chemists”, “D. Mendelejev’s family and relatives”, “Mendelejev as organic chemist”, “Chemical protection of plants and animals”, “Chemistry and nature protection”. In 1978 Professor became the laureate of the journal “Mokslas ir gyvenimas”.

P. Buckus revealed himself as a man of letters after Lithuania became independent. He wrote about

Vilnius region people and their problems. Professor spent his childhood in the occupied land and was fully aware of what was going on. He tried to approach the past from today, to remember various events and people. His recollections about Professor K. Daukšas, J. Budzinskis, J. Laužikas were very interesting and meaningful. It is surprising how deeply Professor perceived various public phenomena.

B. Buckus wrote: “In the light of eternity secondary matters wear off, only the main things remain”. We could not say which matters were secondary in the professor’s activity. Besides, he was a not only a renowned pedagogue and scientist, a leader, but also a husband, father and grandfather.

May his memory live for ever.

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