

## ***In memoriam*** **Professor Dr. Vladimir Randelović** **(1965-2023)**

*Original Article*

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Professor Vladimir Randelović was a full professor at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in Nis, an outstanding scientist, and a connoisseur of the plant life of Serbia and the Balkan Peninsula. Unfortunately, at the peak of his life, after a severe illness struck him, Professor Vladimir Randelović passed away on March 18, 2023, at the age of 57. Despite the adversity he faced, he remained dedicated to his ideals until the last moments of his life: education, upbringing, and scientific research.

Vladimir Randelović was born on February 18, 1965, in Toplički Kočan, near Niš. He attended elementary school in Doljevac, and he completed high school, specializing as a laboratory technician in biology, in Nis. As a successful student, even before completing his final year of study, he graduated in biology from the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in Novi Sad in 1988. A year after obtaining his bachelor's degree, he enrolled in postgraduate studies at the University of Zagreb. However, due to the regional political situation, he was unable to defend his completed PhD thesis. He continued his postgraduate studies at the Faculty of Biology, University of Belgrade, where he first

defended his PhD thesis under the mentorship of Academician Vladimir Stevanović in 1994. In 2002, he successfully defended his doctoral dissertation titled "Flora and Vegetation of the Vlasina Plateau".

From 1989 to 2000, Professor Vladimir Randelović worked at the Faculty of Technology in Leskovac and was involved in teaching at the Higher Agricultural-Food School in Prokuplje. Soon after, he also worked at the Faculty of Occupational Safety in Niš. With the establishment of the Faculty of Sciences and Mathematics in Niš in 2000, he started working at the Department of Biology and Ecology. For a certain number of years, he was also involved in teaching Botany at the Faculty of Medicine in Niš. After completing his assistantship, he was appointed as an assistant professor in 2002, associate professor in 2007, and finally, in 2012, he was promoted to the position of full professor at the Faculty of Sciences and Mathematics, University of Niš, Serbia. Throughout his academic career, he was responsible for a wide range of botanical subjects, with notable emphasis on Systematics and Phylogeny of Higher Plants, Plant Ecology with Phytogeography, and other subjects.



During his rich professional career from 2000 to 2004, he served as a secretary, and from 2004 to 2009, he held the position of the head of the Department of Biology and Ecology. Professor Vladimir Randelović was the vice-dean for education for many years, and in 2019, he also served as the dean of the Faculty of Sciences and Mathematics, University of Niš. He was a member of several international scientific organizations such as the “Organization for Phytotaxonomic Research of the Mediterranean Region” and the “Society for Phytosociological Research of Italy”. He was a respected member of the “Ecological Society of Serbia” and the president and one of the founders of the Biological Society “Dr. Sava Petrović”. Since 2011, he had been a member of the Academic Committee for Research on Flora and Vegetation of Serbia at the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU).

The result of Professor Vladimir Randelović's extensive scientific research work includes numerous scientific and professional publications. Among them, four monographs of national importance should be highlighted, particularly the monograph “Flora and Vegetation of the Vlasina Plateau,” which provides a comprehensive overview of the plant life in the area that was particularly interesting to Professor Vladimir Randelović. Professor Vladimir Randelović's research provides significant contributions to the flora of the Republic of Serbia, with a larger number of plant species being reported for the first time in his works. Certain taxa have been described as entirely new species of algae and plants for science. Among them, notable mentions include *Chara visianii* J. Blazenčić & V. Randjel., an algae from the charophyte group described from Croatia, *Campanula calycialata* V. Randjel. & Zlatković, a species from the bellflower family found on Stara Planina in Serbia, as well as three species of the genus *Crocus*, *C. jablanicensis* Randjel. & V. Randjel., *C. danubiensis* Kernd., Pasche, Randjel. & V. Randjel., and *C. novicii* V. Randjel. & Miljković. Professor Vladimir Randelović, along with Professor Novica Randelović, was one of the leading experts and authorities on the genus *Crocus*, and as a tribute to their contributions, a new species of saffron, *C. randjeloviciorum* Kernd., Pasche, Harpke & Raca, was dedicated to them by other authors.

In almost all of his works, Professor Vladimir Randelović emphasized an ecological approach in botanical research, with a significant number of his papers dedicated exclusively to phytocoenological issues. He described a range of new vegetation units, orders, alliances, associations, and subassociations from the southern part of the Balkan Peninsula, paying special attention to plant communities in

peatlands and wet habitats in Serbia. Professor Vladimir Randelović established good collaboration with fellow chemists, resulting in a substantial number of papers that explore endemic, rare, and lesser-known species of our flora from a phytochemical perspective.

In addition to everything mentioned, the name of Professor Vladimir Randelović will always be associated with the Symposium on the Flora of Southeastern Serbia and neighboring regions. The excellent atmosphere and good organization have characterized all 14 Symposiums held so far, for which we owe special gratitude to Professor Vladimir Randelović.

Professor Vladimir Randelović was the chief and responsible editor of the new, now well-known scientific journal with international peer review, “Biologica Nyssana”, published by the Faculty of Sciences and Mathematics, University of Niš, Serbia. He was also the editor of almost all the proceedings from the aforementioned Symposium and was appointed as one of the editors of the multi-volume edition “Vegetation of Serbia,” published by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Professor Vladimir Randelović mentored two doctoral dissertations, a significant number of master's theses, and a large number of undergraduate and master's projects. Students will remember Professor Vlada for his willingness to help solve any teaching-related problems and support their scientific research.

The plant life of unexplored regions of the Balkan Peninsula served as an endless inspiration for him. During his research, Professor Vladimir Randelović collected valuable herbarium specimens that are now preserved in the Herbarium of the chair of Botany (“Herbarium Moesiicum Niš”), to which he dedicated many years of establishment and improvement.

In the end, Professor Vladimir Randelović was one of the founders of the Department of Botany at the Faculty of Sciences and Mathematics in Niš, where he will be remembered as an exceptional teacher, dedicated researcher, supportive colleague, and friend.