

THE HAPPY ROAD OF KNOWLEDGE

(dedicated to the ASM Corresponding Member Nikon UNGUR's 70th anniversary)

The community of chemists in the Republic of Moldova knows many personalities who have boldly contributed to the shaping of major research directions in various scientific fields of national and international impact. It is our privilege to address an homage to one of them, doctor habilitate (Dr. hab.), associate professor, corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova (ASM), Nikon Ungur, who has recently marked his honorable 70-th jubilee.

Nikon Ungur is an outstanding personality and renowned scientist in the field of bioorganic chemistry and synthetic organic chemistry. His major contributions to the altar of science belong to the study of natural compounds. In particular, one should mention the development of biomimetic methods for the synthesis of cyclic mono-, sesqui-, di-, and sesterterpenoids from aliphatic or partially cyclized precursors, the synthesis of natural terpenoids of terrestrial and marine origin, including those with biological activity, the synthesis of terpenoids with new skeleta through molecular rearrangements, the synthesis of terpenoids with fragrance properties, and the valorization of local resources of biologically active compounds.

ASM corresponding member, Dr. hab. Nikon Ungur was born on April 23, 1954, in the village of Olișcani, former Rezina district. He completed his primary and secondary studies in his native village, being fortunate to meet talented teachers who cultivated his love for the miraculous world of natural sciences. In particular, his passion for chemistry was awakened by the late professor Iurie Revenco, who guided him to continue his studies at the Faculty of Chemistry of Moldova State University (MSU).

After successfully completing his university studies, on the recommendation of the late academician Nicolae Gărbălău, he became involved in research at the Institute of Chemistry, ASM, in the Laboratory of Hetero-oleaginous Plants Chemistry as a chemical engineer. In 1985, he defended his PhD thesis entitled "Synthesis of isoagathanic diterpenoids" at the Physico-Chemical Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Odesa), and in 1994, the Dr. Sci. thesis entitled



Corresponding Member Nikon UNGUR

"Synthesis of cyclic terpenoids by superacid cyclization" at the Institute of Chemistry, ASM. Both works were carried out under the direction of the late academician Pavel VLAD, with whom he decisively contributed to the achievements of international resonance in the field of superacidic cyclization of natural compounds with terpenic structure.

During his lifelong career at the Institute of Chemistry, ASM corresponding member, Dr. hab. Nikon Ungur ascended through all the stages of a scientist, from the position of junior scientific researcher (1981) to principal scientific researcher (1997), and head of an internationally renowned laboratory (2010).

Simultaneously with his research, he also carried out didactic activities. Between 2008-2019, he was a university professor in the Department of Chemistry, Mathematics, and Informatics of the University of ASM, where he taught courses on stereochemistry, fine organic synthesis, terpenes and terpenoids, and methods for the synthesis of new polyfunctional substances. Since 2017, he has been a university lecturer at the Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Technology of MSU, teaching the course "Target-oriented synthesis of terpenoids with biological activity."

He was appointed PhD supervisor (1988) and associate professor (1990). Four doctoral and one habilitation theses were defended under his guidance.

He participated in the implementation of numerous national and international research and innovation projects, published more than 250 scientific papers, including 4 chapters in international monographs, 111 articles in high-impact international journals, including 6 review articles, and co-authored 19 patents. He also contributed to the establishment of international collaborative projects of the Institute of Chemistry with colleagues from many international research groups.

The scientific and managerial contributions of ASM corresponding member Nicon Ungur were recognized with several prestigious awards, including the ASM Youth Award (1984), the Youth Award of the Republic of Moldova (1986), the ASM Diploma of Gratitude (2001), the ASM

Diploma of Honor (2004), the ASM Award for Scientific Achievements (2008), and the ASM Medal "Dimitrie Cantemir" (2014). This year, as a sign of special appreciation for his scientific merits, ASM corresponding member Nicon Ungur was awarded the ASM Medal for Scientific Merit, 1st degree.

On the occasion of his anniversary, the members of the editorial board of the Chemistry Journal of Moldova, along with the researchers of the Institute of Chemistry and colleagues from the Chemistry of Natural and Biologically Active Compounds laboratory, wish the distinguished scientist Nicon Ungur a blessed state of health and spirit and new remarkable achievements in the fascinating world of science and education.

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