

## In Memoriam: Aleksej Kansky, 1925–2015



Our teacher, mentor, and colleague of many years, Aleksej Kansky, passed away on October 6th, 2015.

Aleksej Kansky was born in Ljubljana on February 23rd, 1925, where he attended classical secondary school and then graduated from the Faculty of Medicine in 1951. After completing his internship, he studied chemistry for eight semesters at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics.

From 1955 to 1957, he worked in the biochemistry laboratory at the Ljubljana Outpatient Hospital, and from 1957 to 1979 he was employed at the Dermatology Clinic in Ljubljana as a dermatologist and as head of the biochemistry laboratory.

He passed the board exam in dermatology in 1961, and received his doctorate in 1966.

From 1965 to 1967, as a Humboldt research fellow, he underwent further training at dermatology clinics in Mainz, Frankfurt, and Munich, and he spent the 1970–71 academic year as a Fulbright scholar at Columbia University's Dermatology Department in New York.

In 1968 he was appointed to the rank of assistant professor, followed by associate professor in 1974 and full professor of dermatology in 1978.

From 1979 until his retirement in 1991, he served as head of the Dermatology Department at the School of Medicine in Zagreb.

In 1982 in Zagreb, Kansky organized the first postgraduate program in dermatology in the former Yugoslavia. That same year, together with his colleagues in Zagreb, he published the textbook *Kožne i spolne bolezni* (Dermatology and Venereal Diseases), which was revised and reprinted in two further editions.

In 1995, Kansky became an associate of the Department of Dermatology at the Ljubljana Medical Center, where he was responsible for teaching and research.

Kansky served as an advisor for twelve doctoral students and fifteen master's students. He published over 230 scholarly articles. As an invited lecturer, he spoke at many institutions in Europe and North America.

In 2002, together with his colleagues in Ljubljana, he published the textbook *Kožne i spolne bolezni* (Dermatology and Venereal Diseases).

He was an honorary member of the Czech and Polish dermatology societies, a member of the American Academy of Dermatology, and a corresponding member of the French, German, Aus-

trian, and Italian dermatology societies. From 1988 to 1991, he served as chairman of the Yugoslav Association of Dermatology.

In 1974, together with the late Janez Fettich and Stjepan Bunta, he founded the professional dermatology journal *Acta dermatovenereologica Jugoslavica*. He served as its editor for eight years, and as editor-in-chief from 1988 to 1991.

In 1992, Kansky founded the international dermatology journal *Acta dermatovenereologica Alpina, Pannonica et Adriatica* in Ljubljana. He was the journal's editor-in-chief until 2009, and afterwards its honorary editor.

After 1996, a combination of unfortunate circumstances placed Slovenian dermatology in a very disadvantageous position. Due to the retirement and premature death of several teaching staff, Slovenia was left without any dermatology instructors. During this period, Professor Kansky, who had already retired, was the leading Slovenian dermatologist. He organized international conferences, assisted in publication, and trained teaching and research staff, who gradually started assuming the burden that Kansky had borne alone.

In spite of his years, Aleksej Kansky remained active for a very long time. He participated in conferences, took part in graduate programs, and was present every day at the Ljubljana Department of Dermatology practically until the end of his life.

As testimony to his persistent and indefatigable work, the second revised edition of his textbook for medical and dental students, *Kožne i spolne bolezni*, was published in early 2009.

Kansky expressed a profound and accurate concept, which may serve as food for thought, when he said that "enthusiastic teachers are very important for the cultural, professional, economic, scholarly, and intellectual development of their nation, but there are differences in teachers' work. Primary- and secondary-school teachers mostly convey information to their students directly, whereas the primary task of an instructor in tertiary education is to create an appropriate environment in which they and their associates participate in teaching, research, and scholarship with pleasure. Of course, a university instructor also teaches, but those working together also learn from one another. The discipline can only advance if leaders use their professional and moral authority to lead their associates in a spirit of tolerance."

Many Slovenian physicians, especially university instructors, continue to pursue teaching and research after they retire, and they also participate in developing the profession in their area. Regrettably, we often forget them and only in rare cases is their



Maribor, 2003. Robert A. Schwartz, Jovan Miljković, and Aleksej Kansky.

work accorded the recognition and distinction it deserves!

We are grateful to Aleksej Kansky, our respected teacher and mentor, for all of the effort that he invested in the development of Slovenian dermatology. We are thankful for the great contribution that he made to molding its teaching staff, without which the advancement of modern Slovenian dermatology would not have been possible.

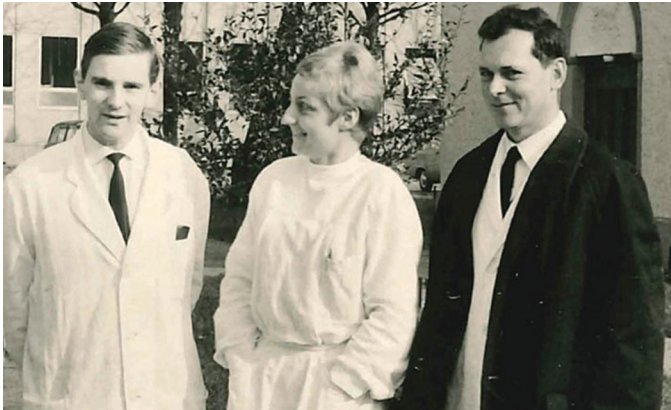
We have lost a man that enriched our time, and whose work

enriched our lives.

He will always occupy a respected place in our memory.

On behalf of the editorial board of the journal *Acta dermatovenerologica* and the Slovenian Association of Dermatology (ZSD), and also personally, I offer sincere and heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Aleksej Kansky.

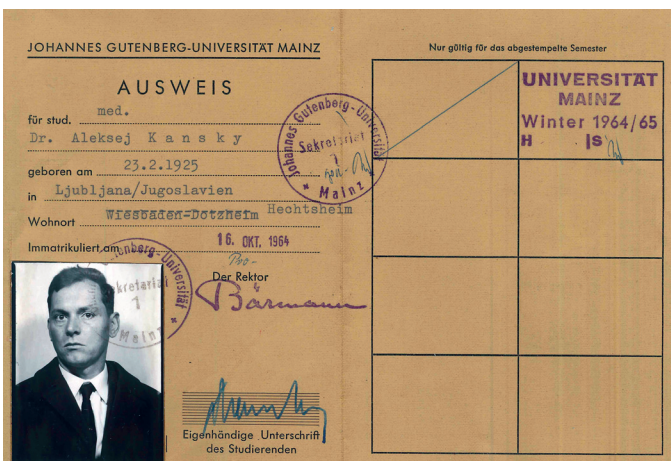
Jovan Miljković



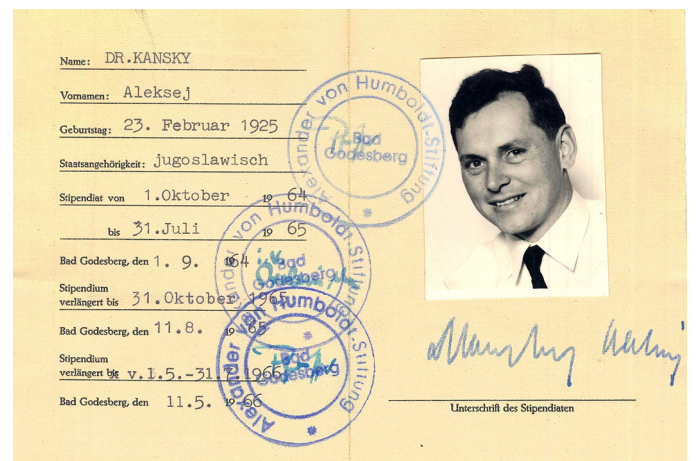
Ljubljana, 1967. In front of the biochemistry laboratory at Dermatology Clinic in Ljubljana.



November 26th, 1982. Finishing the second semester of the first postgraduate program in dermatology.



University of Mainz ID card.



Alexander von Humboldt fellow ID card.