

**VLADIMIR Č. TRIFUNOVIĆ: WHOLE LIFE TIME DEDICATED TO
MAIZE**

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Vladimir Č. Trifunović, Full member of Academy of Engineering Sciences of Serbia (AESS) since 1999. as well as the first Secretary of its Biotechnology Sciences Division, and Emeritus Scientific Advisor at Maize Research Institute

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„Zemun Polje“ was born on November 2, 1921 in the village Loznica near Valjevo, by father Čedomir and mother Danica. He completed high school in Valjevo, enrolled the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, University of Belgrade in 1946 and graduated from it in 1949. During 1953 he pursued 7-month specialization in the USA in the field of maize genetics and breeding and in 1958. As a scholar of the FAO he enrolled in the College of Agriculture, University of Illinois, where he obtained an M.Sc. degree with the thesis „Sister Line single Crosses“ under the guidance of professor R.W.Jugenheimer. His Ph.D. degree he obtained with the thesis „Studies of Possible Utilization of Pollen cytoplasmatic Sterility in Maize Hybrid Seed Production“ at the Faculty of Agriculture in Belgrade in 1965. In 1978, he became a foreign member of the Pan-Russian Academy of Agricultural Sciences in Moscow, and year after also of the analogous Academy of Germany DR. In 1999 he was elected a full member of the Engineering Sciences of Serbia: he was a member of the founding Commission and the secretary of the Biotechnology Sciences Division.

Vladimir Trifunović was engaged for 30 years in managing the Institute as project coordinator, Deputy Director and Director General. So, his own life and development as a scientist are inseparable from the Maize Research Institute development and progress. He has had intensive interest in practical and applied aspects of maize genetics and breeding both in theoretical and basic studies of gene action. He has had great impact on the development of the Maize Research Institute by the improvement and development of classical breeding and selection methods that have contributed directly to increase of maize yield and improvement of its quality. The evolutionary character of his approach to the Institute's program is its crucial characteristic. Following this approach the Institute has started and successfully developed investigation in the field of plant physiology, biophysics, and biotechnology. The Maize Research Institute „Zemun Polje“ became the leading institution in maize research in the country. It was very important to maintain the balance between fundamental and applied studies for the Institute's development, but it was not such an easy process. As the main his own result of this multidisciplinary approach in maize breeding is that he is originator of the first inbred lines extracted from domestic populations which were the parental components of Single – cross hybrids. Among many original inbred lines, 18 have been and still are in use to develop more than 80 officially released maize hybrids, which is the base of hybrid seed production in all countries of former Yugoslavia. Seventeen hybrids of his own creation are growing in the majority of European countries, Russia and other countries of former USSR, China, North Korea, as well as in some African countries (Ethiopia, Zambia, Angola, Mozambique, Kenya, and Tanzania). Specifically, his decision to start application of breeding technology based on molecular genetics methods at Maize Research Institute has been and will be in the future recognized as pioneer work and the best indicator that this approach has been good are two published monographs, 28 scientific papers in international and national scientific journals, 21 invited lectures in international and 9 in national scientific conferences or congresses as well as parallel development and introduction of the hybrid maize

seed production, commercial maize growing, and maize utilization in the starch and oil production.

As maize breeding success is dependent on genetically divergent material, Vladimir Trifunović with Jelena Pavličić (in the frame of USDA – Yugoslavia Project started during 1962) organized collection, characterization, and preservation of domestic maize germplasm in the Balkan region. That has been start of the maize Gene Bank establishment in this region. Today, this Gene Bank is included in the group of first 10 on the list of Maize Gene Banks of the world.

Active cooperation, starting with the visit to U.S.A. by a group of five scientists, was the background to development of international cooperation, which significantly affected modernization of scientific and research programs of the Institute, improvement of business policy enrichment of experience gained in various countries and different social systems, and the improvement of the Institute's economic status. Among many result of this, Maize Research Institute „Zemun Polje“ became one of the training centers for agronomists working on maize. The international Maize Training Center for education of young breeders and seeds men was founded. The participants became specialists acquainted with the modern methods and techniques of breeding in the world and with solutions applied at the Institute, especially within the field of seed production and processing, maize growing practices, and maize utilization (as animal feed and in industrial processing). A total of 266 agronomists (from 32 Africans, 8 Americans, 3 European and 20 Asian countries) participated in the course held by the International Centre founded in 1978. They returned to their countries with the knowledge and memories about meetings and discussions with Vladimir Trifunović, because he personally visited with each participant.

Vladimir Trifunović has been one of the editors of *Maydica*, *Genetika* (Belgrade), *Journal of Agricultural Research*, and several magazines for the farmers. He was FAO expert consultant at Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture, and coordinator of bilateral inter institute program with Iran, Angola, Zambia, and Mozambique. During 1978 he became a foreign member of Pan - Russia Academy of Agricultural sciences in Moscow, and in 1979 a member of the analogous Academy of the Germany DR. In 1999 he was elected for the member of the Academy of Engineering Sciences of Former Yugoslavia. He also was president of EUCARPIA Maize and Sorghum Section, member of FAO Commission for Maize and Sorghum genetic resources under FAO, and of International Committee for Maize and Sorghum genetic resources under CIMMYT as well as Yugoslav representative in the Project “Selection of Early Maturity Hybrids” of East-European countries. He has received a number of honors and awards: national as well as Honorary Commander of Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, by Her Majesty, Elisabeth II, the Queen of the UK (1972), and Golden Wreath Labor. Decoration (1974), “IV Premio” by the International Association of Journalists in Agriculture, Trieste, Italy etc.

On behalf of countless maize geneticists and breeders, having opportunity to know and particularly to be member of his research team, Editorial Board decided to dedicate this issue of GENETIKA to Vladimir Trifunović.

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