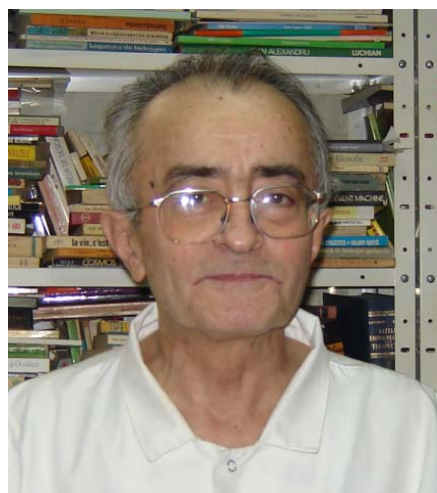


## VALERIU RUSU

(28 August 1939 – 1 May 2014)

Professor Valeriu Rusu passed away on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014.

A significant personality of the medical scientific world, he was born in Bucharest, on August 28, 1939. He graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy, Iași, in 1964, and from the Faculty of History-Philosophy at the “A.I. Cuza” University, Iași, in 1974. His medical career began as a general practitioner at Ițcani-Suceava Dispensary, between 1964–1968, period that, in his words, “was one of the most beautiful”, being attracted by the art of diagnosis and the communication with the patient.



From 1968, he returns to the side of so logical and exciting basic medical sciences, becoming an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Medicine, I.M.F. Iași, Medical Physics Department, later named Biophysics, and since 1994, under his leadership, Department of Medical Biophysics and Nuclear Medicine. Here, his entire professional career (as a Professor, since 1990) will develop. “I have chosen this area for several reasons, among them a certain independence of mind and the opportunity to have scientific relations”, he confessed.

The stages followed in France, since 1974, stages of Biophysics and Nuclear Medicine, mainly in Lyon and Paris (including the famous Scholarship of the College of Medicine of the Paris Hospitals) definitely influenced his evolution. In those laboratories, he intensively studied the *in vitro* basic techniques for fundamental research, especially the electron microscopy techniques. He took the model of biophysics related to nuclear medicine, which, once returned home, has developed, later, in the laboratory at Iași, giving a value and consistency that have

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been recognized both locally and nationally. He never wanted to leave Romania, but Paris remained his city of soul for life. He kept returning there almost every year, to take “a breath of fresh air for mind, heart and soul”, his words. He developed a strong scientific collaboration and friendship that lasted for a lifetime with biophysicists from where he worked in France. He had an important role in the organization, in a time when such a project seemed to be unbelievable, of the *Franco-Romanian Days of Biophysics and Nuclear Medicine*, First Edition – Bucharest, 1983; Second Edition – Clermont-Ferrand, 1984; Third Edition – Iași, 1985; Fourth Edition – Marseille, 1986. At the same time, he kept close inter-university Franco-Romanian friendship, being a great French language speaker and francophile – fact recognized and acknowledged in 2003 by the Decree of the Prime Minister of France, with the decoration *l'Ordre de Palmes Académiques en rang de Chevalier*. He was one of the initiators of the study program in French at the “Gr.T. Popa” University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Iași. He was also the initiator of the Doctoral School, and of some course directions that have highlighted his vast culture (*Medicine and Culture*) and accomplished his scientist qualities (*Scientific Methodology of Research and Documentation*).

Between 1990–2004, he was part of the leadership of the Faculty of Medicine, the first six years as scientific secretary, later, for 8 years (1996–2004), being one of the most beloved and appreciated Deans of the Faculty of Medicine, recognized locally and, also, nationally and even internationally. He was the President of the Iași subsidiary of the *Romanian Society of Pure and Applied Biophysics* and co-president of the Nuclear Medicine Commission of the Ministry of Health. He was awarded two times the “Victor Babeș” Award of the Romanian Academy, in 1991 and 2001, and the CopyRo Award in medicine (for his *Medical Dictionary*), in 2003. He was a Member of the Academy of Medical Sciences and Editor-in-Chief of the *The Medical-Surgical Journal* of the Society of Physicians and Naturalists, Iași, until his early passage into eternity. He managed to develop a school of Biophysics and Nuclear Medicine and lead modern Laboratories of Biophysics and Nuclear Medicine (being a nuclear medicine physician and functional explorations physician), the only one of such a caliber in the North-East of Romania (by equipping and scientific results in Romania and abroad, in nuclear medicine domain). This laboratory now bears his name and continues his orientation, developing the research of the radiotracers cellular uptake biophysical mechanisms. He was an author, co-author or contributor of several books, as well as of an impressive number of scientific articles. Between these, the most remarkable remains his famous *Medical Dictionary*, regularly updated in four editions (2001, 2004, 2007, and 2010) at Editura Medicală (Medical Publishing House, Bucharest). Particularly valuable are, also, the monograph *Biomembrane and Pathology*, published in two volumes (Medical Publishing House), a biography of Nobel Prizes (*Nobel: Retrospective 1901–1995, Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine*) published in 1996 at Omnia Publishing House, and the first written

material that appeared in the journal *Viata Medicală (Medical Life)*, immediately after the announcement of the Nobel Prize for Medicine and Physiology, every year. All of them were written with passion and the desire to give a meaning to every great scientific achievement, in human terms, facts, circumstances and mechanisms of scientific discovery. Each material was complex and flavorsome at the same time, a convoluted words material, data and facts, every word being the fruit of his complex mind, after a documentation of exceptional quality, intensely toiled and passed through the filter of his mind and vast culture.

But, in order to understand who really Professor Valeriu Rusu was, it is rather incorrect to reduce the presentation to a number of biographical data. Professor's personality could be best understood while entering into his world, into his office. A complex and picturesque universe, expression of his personality, the Professor's office fascinated anyone who entered this sanctuary. The atmosphere was dominated by books that crowded from top to bottom on the desk, chairs, even on the floor, on shelves, on the table... all around... stacks of books, in a mess, more or less apparent, showing how much was worked with them. A sort of ordered disorder, that seems to be in agreement with the concept of "liquid crystal" as the expression of membrane fluidity, theory that the great master presented so clearly and plastic to his students. A world of books whose content existed encrypted in the Professor's mind, only a fraction of the many things listed here. A clear expression of this property of the human neurons, hard to be understood, which consists in storage of unimaginable quantities of information, that cannot only be played back but also processed in complex ways. A universe where could be found scattered shells, corals and other aquatic wonders, gathered in a picturesque collection, or a fugu fish (reminding the relationship between tetrodotoxin and sodium channels) swaying slightly, hanging on the arm of a reading lamp, just above the office, constant witness of many, many long evenings when the lamp lighted the Professor's working manuscript, pressed and tidy written with a gel pen, chosen especially for its easy slip, perhaps alike his thoughts.

What was extraordinary, more than impressive, at Professor Valeriu Rusu personality? What attracted and conquered hundreds of students that filled auditoriums and everyone who stepped in his world? What made him so loved by students, still coming back to see him, either for mentoring advice or for Christmas Carols, with love and respect, year by year after they passed this small discipline, felt – by some of them – slightly indigestible, and – by some others – fascinating, Biophysics? From where did this *aura* come, which transformed him from a not so *great stature man* into a man *so respected and beloved*?

These were all the expression of his personality: a prominent figure, encyclopedic mind, complex nature, with a special sensitivity and modesty, that explains why so few stories and photos about this great Professor can be found on Internet. He was avid of writing and complex scientific terms and expressions decryption, whose fruit was until towards the end of his life the *Lexis* heading from

the weekly journal *Viața Medicală*, for which he worked a lot, like he used to do for everything else. And this was not because he could not be able to quickly write the article from the impressive *references* he had in his mind, but because he was convinced that everything should be done with a deadly serious work.

*Seriousness + extreme self-exigency = professionalism*, this was his essence. And, above all, the great love for his profession as a teacher and trainer of the medical and PhD students minds. A fair professor, who could only be influenced, sometimes, by his own heart. A teacher who managed to find the way to the misunderstood part of each of his students, sometimes demanding exigence but always with exceptional results, improving their medical research skills.

It remained enormously encrypted data in his mind, an unwritten encyclopedia that went away along with his human being. He still had a lot to say, as confessed, some time ago: “I have other projects too, but their completion is not up to me... I do not know if time will be patient”. Time did not have patience. He’s not longer with us, but he will remain alive in our memories, of those mentored by him and all those who met him.

There are *big* people because they have a certain big talent. But there are people who have a complex *aura* that is not just the sum of their talents and their qualities. These are the truly *unrepeatable humans*, and Professor Valeriu Rusu was one of them.

The teams of Laboratories of Biophysics and Medical Physics, Nuclear Medicine, and Pharmaceutical Physics, “Gr.T. Popa” University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Iași