

# žurnál

The magazine of Palacký University Olomouc – Alumni Edition – 2016/2

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my city



Palacký University  
Olomouc

Genius loci...

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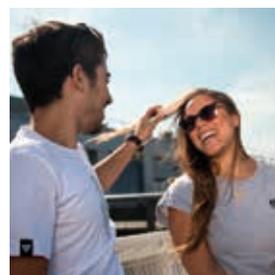


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## contents

- 3 – The World of Palacký University
- 5 – Plastic surgeon Bohdan Pomahač
- 7 – Judge Eva Šonková
- 9 – Chemist Radek Zbořil
- 11 – Musician Jiří Pavlica
- 13 – UP alumni include...
- 15 – Photographer Jindřich Štreit
- 17 – Trainer Iva Machová
- 19 – Haematologist Karel Indrák
- 21 – Journalist Jakub Železný
- 23 – Psychologist Helena Suková
- 25 – UP in the course of time
- 27 – Gemmotherapist Jarmila Podhorná
- 29 – Canoeing trainer Robert Knebel
- 31 – Molecular biologist Jiří Bártek
- 33 – Diplomat Martin Povejšil
- 35 – Zoologist Ivana Cinková
- 37 – Chaplain Jaroslav Knichal
- 39 – UP Endowment Fund
- 40 – UP in numbers

cover photo: Marek Partyš

**Žurnál** | Published annually in English | Czech Registration No.: MK ČR E 12524, ISSN 1804-6754 | Published by Palacký University Olomouc, Křížkovského 8, CZ-771 47 Olomouc, Czech Republic | VAT No.: 61989592 | Chairman of the Editorial Board: Petr Bílík | Editor-in-Chief: Ivana Pustějovská | Layout: Věra Marešová | Graphic Editor: Michaela Cyprová | Proofreading: Matthew Sweney | **Editorial Board** | Biskupské nám. 1, Olomouc | Telephone: +420 585 634-155 | E-mail: zurnal@upol.cz | **Print** | Profi-Tisk Group Olomouc | 1 000 copies



Dear students, esteemed colleagues  
and graduates of Palacký University,

In 2016 we are celebrating 450 years since the founding of the Jesuit university which was the foundation of our academy, and also the 70th anniversary of the re-establishment of Olomouc's university after World War II. These are the compelling reasons for this special edition of *Žurnál*, in which we present 15 personalities, all Palacký University graduates, who have excelled in the sciences, sport, and culture, and whose reputations have travelled far beyond the borders of the Czech Republic.

These include the world-famous surgeon Bohdan Pomahač, the photographer Jindřich Štreit, the scientist Radek Zbořil, the musician Jiří Pavlica, and the tennis player Helena Suková. Through their outstanding achievements, they represent not only the Czech Republic, but also Palacký University Olomouc.

I am of course aware that our choice of interviewees is necessarily unfair, because hundreds and thousands of our alumni are working in diverse fields and achieving amazing results. Palacký University is proud of its graduates and wants to share with them these personal and professional stories.

Because one must work today in order to achieve success tomorrow, Palacký University has started the UP Endowment Fund – the first of its kind in the Czech Republic – which supports the academic, scientific, and artistic activities of our students.

I wish us all many motivated students... who will one day become successful UP alumni.

Jaroslav Miller  
Rector, Palacký University Olomouc



Three rectors:  
The first post-1989 rector, Josef Jařab, together  
with today's rector, Jaroslav Miller. On the wall  
behind them is the first rector of the university  
after its re-instatement after WW2, J.L. Fischer.

# The World of Palacký University

text: Ivana Pustějovská  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

**We're discovering, we're healing, we're teaching. We're changing the world. We're UP. Despite a certain amount of exaggeration and journalese, that's exactly what Palacký University and its graduates are doing.**

Becoming an alumnus of a renowned university means becoming part of a respectable society whose influence touches all areas of human life. The more we're spread out across the world, the more important it is to have something which connects us, something dear to us. For many people the awareness of belonging to something or someone is increasingly important. That connecting element can be one's studies and the town where one studied. "Every person operates within a quite wide network of relationships and has several identities. Palacký University Olomouc is keen that a feeling of solidarity with the university should be an integral part of the identity of our alumni. Our goal is to build a community of people – students, employees, alumni – associated by their affiliation with UP, regardless of their age, field, or place of residence," says UP Rector Jaroslav Miller. It is he who at present is further extending the legacy of the first post-1989 rector of UP, Josef Jařab.

Jařab, a renowned American Studies professor, took over the leadership of the university after the regime change, and in addition to the difficult conversion of this institution into a modern school in the European manner, he attempted to return the philosophical and spiritual dimension to Palacký University. So that those who have studied there are not "only" alumni, but proud alumni. "When the world was opened up to us after November 1989, we were given the chance to realise academic freedom according to our own conceptions, to be more independent and exercise even our own vote during the

implementation of democracy and also at the university, something we had only dreamed of. After our transformational steps, we could suddenly search for inspiration in a happier world, one which was practically off-limits to us for so many decades. We could put our heads together and implement things according to our own possibilities and conceptions, what we were going to teach and how, what we were going to explore, and where we were going abroad for experience," remembers the rector emeritus, Josef Jařab.

He reminisces on the significance of Olomouc and its genius loci, which attracts not only Czech students, but students from around the world. "We're bigger now and Olomouc has become more of a university town. And students from other countries come to study here, because the university today speaks many languages. We have taken a promising direction, but there is still more work to be done – because the process of education actually never ends. Looking back on the history of the Olomouc university, perhaps I can say that the year 1989 began the third era of its existence. And those of us who can participate in that are glad of it and grateful to fate," adds Josef Jařab.

Being part of the UP world also means an opportunity for all alumni. "Today the university offers alumni a number of benefits, such as an Alumni Card, but of course more important is the feeling that we have a past experience in common and also – I trust – a future together. We'd be very keen if the relationship between UP and its alumni were a strong, lifelong bond," says Rector Jaroslav Miller.

*Although I will do everything I can to make the tightest bond between Olomouc's university and the entire region of Olomouc, I have never seen the mission of Palacký University to be a mere regional university. On the contrary, in order for that not to happen, I state at the very outset – if it be in my powers, to insist on the highest standard and never waver from that, as long as I bear the responsibility for its edification.*

*(From the inauguration speech of the first rector at the re-establishment of Palacký University, on February 21, 1947.)*



# **Bohdan Pomahač**

## **I've always got a Plan B**

text: Věna Mazochová  
photo: Kristýna Erbenová

Photographs of the faces he transplanted went around the world long before his own. Now, even his face is as famous as those from his ground-breaking operations: Bohdan Pomahač, plastic surgeon.

— When did you first imagine with some certainty that you could give somebody back a face?

Everything made sense and the technical part of the operation was viable according to our preparations, so I firmly believed that it was not only possible, but that it would work. On the other hand, a person is only really certain in the moment when the first patient is released from the hospital. Until then, anything can happen.

— What motivates you to such demanding operations as complete face transplants? Where do you get the strength to overcome the risk of failure?

I've never avoided difficulty. Just the opposite – one of the reasons why I chose medicine was that it had the reputation of being the most difficult area of study at the university. And that's the same way I operate in my chosen profession. If something is tough, it doesn't stop me – I consider it a challenge. The possibility of failure is not something I usually accept. It's a matter of clinical research – everyone, including the patient, knows that things might not work out. But if you have the will and a cool head, then things usually come through for the most part. Many problems can be foreseen and a person prepares for that; I've always got a Plan B. The most difficult part of the operations are the unknown complications – which nobody can predict, because they've never been seen before. Then Plan B is not enough, and a person must come up on the spot with a Plan C, D, or even E. And there is no time to take measurements, conduct diagnostics with machines, etc. So often it is about the likelihood that your thinking was correct. So far so good, and the chance it might be otherwise in the future is becoming less and less.

— To what extent do the dramatic life stories of your patients weigh down on you? And how does it feel when you allow them to return to a full life?

I think a doctor has to slightly free himself of emotional feelings. Empathy is of utmost

importance; but a doctor cannot involve himself in the drama which the patient has been through and will go through. Medicine in general is a field where the satisfaction from the job is perhaps greater than any other. It's wonderful. A grateful patient is truly grateful – they are not playing games, there's no exaggeration. And that honesty positively influences you as a doctor; that is probably the greatest thing that a person can experience at work. I have a great job.

— You are still coming up with and proving new hypotheses and possibilities in transplantation. Are there any limits in your opinion which cannot be overcome?

In terms of the surgical possibilities in the area of face transplantation, the foundations have been laid. There are a number of things which could be done better in the future, but there will be no radical advancements, rather we will fine-tune the procedure. What is possibly most fascinating is the process of immunological tolerance, the way our body reacts, what is actually going on in that first year and the next years after transplantation. I and a number of my colleagues are finding something new each year, and the longer we've been doing it, then the more probable it is that our results will be a boon to other patients. In my mind, this is likely the most important thing we are doing. Immunology is of course at the centre of rheumatology, autoimmune disorders, transplantations, and also many tumorous diseases. A person never knows which discovery is going to make a difference in other fields.

— What pushes you onward in your work and forces you not to keep doing the same thing?

Doing the same thing is boring! I certainly prefer stimulating work over routine, and I'd guess that the majority of my colleagues feel the same.

— What about your professional ambitions – what would you like to achieve?

I have to admit that I do not have any more ambitions regarding what else to transplant. I enjoy reconstructing faces, I have a lot of projects which are promising and are going forward, so I am continuing in what I started, rather than coveting the next "first" or "major".

#### **Bohdan Pomahač (b. 1971)**

Czech plastic surgeon, a graduate of the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, who carried out the first complete face transplantation in the USA in 2011. Since 1996 he has been employed at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. He has been the Chief Surgeon since 2009 at the Trauma, Burn, and Surgical Critical Care ward. He has already given seven patients face transplants and three patients both upper limbs transplants. He is the recipient of the Neuron Prize for contributions to world science in the field of medicine, and he has also been awarded by the Czech Transplantation Foundation for developments in transplantation medicine. In 2015 the Czech president awarded him the country's Medal for Service. For his significant contributions to the development of plastic surgery methods he was awarded an honorary doctorate by his alma mater – his first.



# **Eva Šonková**

## **Fleeing from the paragraphs into the woods**

text: Eva Hrudníková  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

The avenue of chestnut trees near the Faculty of Law and basketball. Such trifles made the decision for Eva Šonková, today a judge at the Supreme Administrative Court, to spend her student years in Olomouc.

She was interested in languages and philosophy at middle school. But something inside her told her she ought to study something more practical and complex. And so she chose Law. “At that time I spent a lot of time following basketball. I made the decision to go to the place where they play the best basketball. Then that meant Brno, but I ended up elsewhere. Happily, they also played basketball in Olomouc,” remembers Eva Šonková. She applied to Olomouc in Law at a time when that was one of the hardest fields to get into – with 25 applicants vying for each place. Eva Šonková got one of them. “I’ll never forget my first impression of Olomouc. When I went to the entrance exams, the chestnuts were in bloom everywhere. I said to myself, it’s so beautiful – I’m staying,” says the native of Nový Jičín.

Šonková, one of the youngest judges at the Supreme Administrative Court, considers her student days as an absolutely essential period in her life. “I made the most important social contacts at that time, ones which still continue – student friendships. Even my husband studied at Palacký University.” When she mentions teachers she met at the university, she does it with respect. It would be impossible for her to name everyone who had a huge impact upon her – but at least two stand out: Pavol Holländer and Josef Rakovský.

#### Headfirst into Administrative Law

Eva Šonková has her office hidden on the fourth floor of the grandiose historic building of the Supreme Administrative Court in the Brno town centre. Only those in the know can find her in the maze of corridors. She has no clear answer to the question why she decided to become a judge after studying Law. Apparently she couldn’t conceive of another calling connected with those paragraphs during her studies. “I would only have considered other work if I couldn’t have been a judge.”

Her path to the Supreme Administrative Court was fairly direct, but it certainly was not an easy one. She began her career as an assistant judge at the Supreme Court of the Czech Republic. After a year she came up on the waiting list at the District Court in Rokycany. The shift from a huge building

full of top-flight lawyers to a “mini-court” is something for which she has absolutely no regrets. Just the opposite. “There I had the opportunity to work next to Zdislava Pražáková, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Czech Republic during the Czechoslovak Federation. She was the one who showed me how to be a judge. She played a huge part in the way I approach my work and how I see the law.” She was named a judge by President Václav Klaus in February 2003. She was twenty-six. Almost immediately afterwards she was headed for the Administrative Justice Section of the Regional Court in Pilsen. “You don’t have much of a choice in the judicial system as to what you want to do. I was offered a job in the Criminal Court, but I didn’t want that. There was no place for me in Civil Court, so I went headfirst into Administrative Law. And I’m glad I did.”

#### Work in Brno, family in Pilsen

According to Eva Šonková, Administrative Law is a slightly neglected field. Especially since it is a fairly recent one. The contemporary shape of Administrative Law is only thirteen years old. “I got in at its beginnings,” she adds, with a smile. After finishing an internship at the Supreme Administrative Court she became a permanent judge in 2007. The Senate, of which she is a member, decides on the average more than four hundred disputes annually between individuals and the state. And what part of her job gives her the greatest joy? “Probably when our decisions are put into practise in the way we judges wanted them to be. When it influences another approach of administrative offices towards individuals – perhaps in that bureaucrats have stopped insisting on nonsensical, long-established formalities, and are trying to resolve the problems they have on their desks, not just ‘manage’ them. When our work rouses lawmakers into some activity and helps remove obvious injustices,” she says.

If she could, she’d probably run home from work. Literally. Running for her is the ideal activity when she has free time. Only... the distance from the court to her home is three hundred kilometres. Her home is in Pilsen. “I have a strange work rhythm. It can be arranged; it needs however the support of the family, good organisation, and resolve in order for it to work.” Part of the week she has to leave her family and dedicate herself intensively to work.

#### Eva Šonková (b. 1976)

A native of Nový Jičín, she was named a judge in 2003. Until 2005 she worked in the District Court in Rokycany, but was assigned to serve in the Administrative Justice Section of the District Court in Pilsen. Later she became a judge in the Regional Court in Pilsen. While working at that court from October 2005 to March 2006 she was temporarily assigned to the Supreme Administrative Court. She became a permanent judge there in 2007.



# Radek Zbořil

## I'm living my dream

text: Martina Šaradínová  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

A renowned scientist in the fields of materials chemistry and nanotechnologies, an excellent teacher, and a successful manager. All these qualities come together in the person of the Director of the Regional Centre of Advanced Technologies and Materials (RCPTM) at Palacký University – Radek Zbořil. A true Olomoucian, loyal to his alma mater, he continues to bring scientists from all over the world to his native city. The scientific institute run by him stands shoulder-to-shoulder with its global rivals.

— What programme were you in, and how do you look back upon your studies?

I graduated from the Faculty of Science in Mathematics and Chemistry. I was not the ideal student, I studied for exams at the last minute, and never missed a single student party. However I learned to accomplish things and work under stress. And this is a skill I've been making use of ever since. Mathematics helped develop logical thinking, while Chemistry satisfied my need for experimental discoveries into how things work.

— What is your expertise?

During my doctoral studies there was a great boom in the study of nanomaterials, due to advancements in microscopic techniques, which allowed imaging of these ultra-tiny particles of matter. So I too became consumed by the desire to recognise the invisible world, where entirely different scientific rules apply. After internships in the United States, Greece, and Japan, I knew that this would be the discipline for me.

— What nanomaterials do you develop and what are their applications?

The answer would fill a book. The most important projects I personally participated in include the development of the thinnest insulator in the world, co-discovered with a group of Nobel Prize laureates in Manchester. Recently, we published an article on our discovery of the strongest known organic magnetic composite. With my colleagues from the UP Faculty of Medicine, we were the first to describe in detail the antimicrobial properties of silver nanoparticles, today commonly used in medical and antiseptic applications. We hold a European patent for the production technology of iron nanoparticles, which are used in the treatment of groundwater contaminated

by organic compounds or heavy metals in many locations here as well as in the rest of Europe.

— You run one of the most successful scientific centres in the country. Was it a big challenge to establish an international institute under Czech conditions?

The establishment of the RCPTM was financed from EU funds in 2010. It was a lengthy process with a demanding international evaluation; but in retrospect, I think it was really worth it. Today the Centre employs 140 scientists from 15 countries. Our specialty is nanomaterials, chemical and optical research. We have managed to attract scientists from prestigious institutes in France, Italy, and the USA. After my doctoral studies, I considered working abroad. The opposite option – to run an international team in Olomouc, joined by the best scientists in the world – sounded like a fantastic dream, but I hoped I could turn it into reality. We have accomplished a number of things. We have outperformed all fifty new Czech institutes that were created within the same European programme in citations. We were the first team at UP that received the prestigious European Research Council grant. Our patented technologies are used at the world's major observatories for the study of cosmic rays and in the largest European accelerator, CERN in Geneva. Long-term contracts with transnational companies such as Procter&Gamble help support our research.

— What are the roles of your alma mater and Olomouc in all of this?

Thanks to UP, we managed to go through the preparatory phase of the project and all public contracts without complications. This is also why today we have the most efficient electron microscope in the country. The university has been an inexhaustible source of students in Master's programmes as well as postgraduates who engage in all our activities. It is not a coincidence that the average age of RCPTM employees is younger than 35 years. Last but not least, Olomouc is a great place for living – a quiet, historical, university town, appreciated by everyone from Asia to South America. Not so long ago a top scientist from Greece moved permanently to Olomouc with all his family, including the grandmother. It may sound trivial, but he is a person who would easily get a job in Germany or England. I think such stories say it all about RCPTM, Palacký University, and Olomouc.

**Radek Zbořil (b. 1973)**

Professor in Physical Chemistry and RCPTM General Director. Co-author of more than 350 publications, with almost 10 000 citations. Recipient of the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports Award. A member of the Learned Society of the Czech Republic, the Board of the ALFA Programme at the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic, National Innovation Platforms, and the Scientific Council at the NEURON Fund for Support of Science, among others. He is the author of a number of patents and technologies that have been successfully commercialised.



# **Jiří Pavlica**

## A man needs an anchor

text: Ivana Pustějovská  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

Gold records, sold out concert halls, respect from his fellow musicians. A man could pride himself on that. But he doesn't. He just can't. He's still as humble as when he started. The musician and composer Jiří Pavlica.

When he opens his mouth, the words do not gush out one after another like a waterfall. Jiří Pavlica chooses his words carefully, and not just those in an interview, but mainly the ones he uses in his work. "The key to understanding everything I do is to understand the content, the message. If somebody reproaches me for doing something too extravagant, I say they are mistaken. That I am only returning to certain values, to something that already existed. Communication for me takes the front seat – the words, the musical expressions are subordinate to it. To everything. Communication is the key," the musician whose name is inseparably linked to the Hradištan Dulcimer Band says calmly.

### **It takes courage**

When he became Hradištan's leader at the end of the 1970s, few expected that the group would become a phenomenon. Hradištan under Pavlica's leadership became a group which never became set in their ways regarding folk music, but instead took it much further. Without abandoning tradition, he has been able to work with musicians across genres and continents. What is taken for granted today – crossing the boundaries of genre – was something which at first was not easy. It took courage. "Today I look back on those days with a smile, even though it was tough. Of course it can happen that even if you give something your all, and you believe in what you do, somebody still won't understand it. That's obvious. But when somebody speculates about your bad intentions, that starts to hold you back and weigh you down. I can admit that today," he says, adding that he does like it when people appreciate what he does. "I think everybody who does something likes it when that work is appreciated. You shouldn't let praise go to your head, but it's nice to be appreciated. Of course it depends on the quality of the criticism, just like the praise. I can tell and feel whether a person really understands my music, whether he or she is just shooting from the hip and wants to hurt, or on the other hand gives empty praise. That kind of praise is

undesired. It makes you happy when you know that another person really understands what you are doing.

### **Life in simplicity and harmony**

It has been some time since Pavlica was "only" the frontman of Hradištan. In the past fifteen years he has been able to enter the contemporary music scene as a composer. He is the author of opuses such as *Missa brevis pastoralis*, *Oratorium of Propitiation*, the suite of dialogues *Trembling*, and his most recent *Midsummer Vigils*, which had its premiere at the beginning of June. Over and over again, with each new project, he takes chances. He is not satisfied with resting on his laurels, he keeps pushing on. And so for weeks, months, he composes, rewrites, rehearses, and suffers through the artist's torture of doubt and uncertainty. In order to stand his own ground. "When the Prague Symphony Orchestra provides you with a world-class orchestra, gives you the Smetana Hall at the Prague Municipal House, saying: 'Write us an evening's-worth of entertainment, and compose anything you want' – that is a challenge," he says, explaining his motivation.

He can handle it. Without getting on the front page of tabloids, without giving up his privacy, he is held in a positive light by both the masses and the professionals in his trade. He is able to gain recognition not only through quality music but also out of that something which radiates from him. Certainty, truth, ruminations on life. "A man needs an anchor in his life, which is why I protect my privacy and family so much. If you have a system of firm values, then you always have something to lean on. Life has big surprises in store for you, and you have to handle the situations, not avoid them, because avoiding the problem won't solve it for the most part. It is always necessary to face it, to solve it. Your whole life can be changed in a second. That's why my system of values is so crucial – it helps me protect what is really important to me, and helps me live," he confides. And when he thinks over the question about what he is going to do next at home and abroad, the answer is seemingly quite simple. "Only to live humbly, in harmony with yourself and your surroundings, with your family and friends, and in the natural world. And of course to be in harmony with that which is above us."

### **Jiří Pavlica (b. 1953)**

He studied Music and Cultural Theory at the UP Faculty of Arts, Violin at the Brno Conservatory, and Composition at the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts under Zdeněk Pololáník and Arnošt Parsch. He has been the leader of Hradištan Dulcimer Band since 1978. He already has a significant body of work behind him: a huge discography including special projects, he composes scores for films and theatre, and he is recognised in the area of contemporary cross-over music. He collaborates with a number of top musicians and bands both in the Czech Republic and abroad.

# UP alumni include...



... the scientist **JAN PEŘINA**, who graduated in Fine Mechanics and Optics at the Faculty of Science. He is the co-discoverer of the properties of non-classical light and an authority in Quantum, Statistical, and Non-Linear Optics.



... a Czech national team member in swimming and cycling, **TEREZA DIEPOLDOVÁ**. She won a silver medal in individual cycling time trial at the Summer Paralympic Games in London.



... jazzman **EMIL VIKLICKÝ**, a famous pianist and composer, who graduated in Numerical Mathematics at the Faculty of Science.



... **VERONIKA JAKUBČIAKOVÁ** MD, a co-founder of the NGO Shalom for Uganda, a healthcare centre and home hospice care programme in Nyakyeru.



... ballet dancer **MONIKA GLOBA**. She graduated in Dance at the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Ostrava and then in Pedagogy and Social Work at the Faculty of Education. Apart from dancing in the NGO Balet Globa, she also works with people with disabilities.



## ... **TOMÁŠ GONGOL**.

A graduate of the Faculty of Law, he is the president of the NGO Bez mámy (Motherless), which is building an Orphans Centre in Mahanga, Tanzania. He also lectures at Silesian University in Opava, where he is the Vice-Rector for Studies and Student Affairs.



... **MARIAN JELÍNEK**, the ice-hockey coach, a former coach of Jaromír Jágr. He graduated in Kinanthropology.



... **MICHAL OTYEPKA**. He graduated in Inorganic Chemistry at the Faculty of Science and became one of the world's most prominent physical chemists. He focuses on research into graphene and its derivatives and is the first UP researcher to be granted a prestigious European Research Council grant.



... a number of important artists. Many generations studied at the Faculty of Education. For instance, the medal-maker and sculptor **ZDENĚK PŘIKRYL**, the performance artist and painter **VLADIMÍR HAVLÍK**, the illustrator and graphic designer **PETR NOVÁK** (known as Ticho 762), and the painter **PAVEL FORMAN**.



... **JAKUB STRAKOŠ**, **VLADIMÍR VALOUCH** and **DAVID HOLZER**, successful sportsmen, who became multiple world and Europe champions in sport aerobics team competition. All three graduated from the Faculty of Physical Culture.



## ... **DAVID DRÁBEK**.

A playwright, director, and art director of Klicpera Theatre in Hradec Králové, he graduated in Film and Theatre Studies at the Faculty of Arts. During his studies he founded the theatre studio Burning Giraffe with **DAREK KRÁL**, where he wrote and directed his own plays.



## ... **LUCIE BALARINOVÁ**.

A Faculty of Education alumna and the founder of the company První pomoc ŽIVĚ (First Aid LIVE), providing first aid courses. She won the women's category in the Czech contest Enterprising Mind 2014.



... the photographer and curator **VLADIMÍR BIRGUS**. He graduated in Literature, Theatre, and Film Studies at the UP Faculty of Arts and in Photography at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. He runs the Institute of Creative Photography at Silesian University in Opava. His photographs are represented in collections such as the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography.



## ... **PAVEL STODŮLKA**,

ophthalmologist and eye surgeon who implanted an artificial cornea into a patient who was blind for 16 years. He also managed to return vision to a patient who had been blind for 53 years. He is the director and owner of the Gemini Eye Clinic in Zlín.



... Rector of the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas in Rome, **MIROSLAV KONŠTANC ADAM**. The alumnus of the SS Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology was named counsellor for the Congregation for the Oriental Churches by Pope Francis two years ago.



... **JAROSLAV DĚDIČ**. The graduate in Journalism and Recreation is the Vice-Chairman of the Czech Television Council.



... many renowned journalists. Czech Radio reporters **VÍT POHANKA** and **PETR VAVROUŠKA**, Czech Television reporters **HELENA DOHNALOVÁ** and **JITKA SZÁSZOVÁ**, and the Lidové noviny editor and laureate of a Czech award for young journalists under 33 years of age **ONDŘEJ KOUTNÍK** all graduated from the Faculty of Arts. The editor-in-chief of Radio Proglas **PAVEL MIKŠŮ** graduated from the Faculty of Theology.



... **PETR ŠEREDA** and **ROMAN SMĚLÝ**. Both graduated from the Faculty of Law and hold superior positions at the High Public Prosecutor's Office in Olomouc. Petr Šereda is Director of the Division for Serious Economic and Financial Crimes, while Roman Smělý runs the Department of Inspection and Standards.



... Eparch **TARAS SENKIV**, OM, Bishop of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Eparchy of Stryi. He graduated from the Faculty of Theology.



... **MILOSLAV BEŠTA**. He graduated from the Department of Informatics at the Faculty of Science and works as a developer in Google Inc. in New York. He praises his alma mater for providing him with both highly specialised and general knowledge. Such expertise is preferred by his current employer.



... several writers. **MARKÉTA PILÁTOVÁ**, the author of novels *Žluté oči vedou domů* (Yellow Eyes Lead Home) and *Má nejmilejší kniha* (My Favourite Book); the poet **RADEK MALÝ**, one of whose books, the poetry collection *Větrní* (Windsome), was awarded with the Magnesia Litera Book of the Year Award; and **MICHAL SÝKORA**, the author of books such as *Případ pro exorcistu* (A Case for an Exorcist) and *Modré stíny* (Blue Shadows), which were adapted for TV.



... several diplomats, graduates from the Faculty of Arts. **DELANA MIKOLÁŠOVÁ** is the first Czech female diplomat in Israel, with specialisation in science partnerships. **JAKUB DŮRR**, a former UP Vice-Rector and Deputy Head of the Czech Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels. Today he is Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for European Issues.



... **ALEX MONHARTOVÁ**, a fashion designer. The Faculty of Arts alumna created the UP fashion collection UniWearCity, available for sale in UPoint.



... **PAVEL KUBA** and **ŠÁRKA KUBOVÁ** who founded their successful entrepreneurship on the knowledge acquired during the study of Analytical Chemistry at the Faculty of Science. Their commercial lab Litolab now closely collaborates with their "home" department.



... several physicians in managerial positions. **SVATOPLUK NĚMEČEK**; **ROMAN HAVLÍK**, who runs the Teaching Hospital Olomouc; **VLADIMÍR SVOZIL**, Director of the EDEL Sanatorium in Zlaté Hory; **RADOMÍR MARÁČEK**, Director of the Karlova Studánka Mountain Spa; and **JOSEF PODSTATA**, Director of Czech Radio Olomouc and Ostrava.



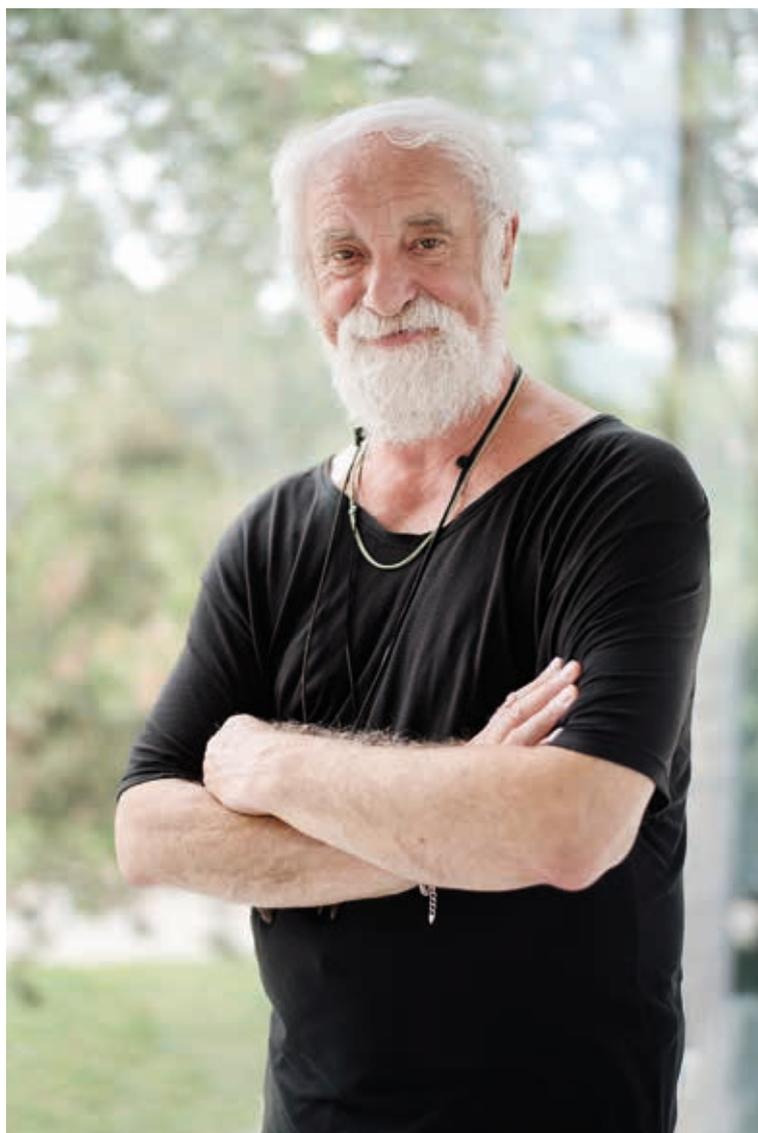
... several city mayors. **ANTONÍN STANĚK**, Mayor of Olomouc, graduated from the Faculty of Education; Prostějov's Mayor **ALENA RAŠKOVÁ** studied at the Faculty of Science, and Mayor of Zlín **MIROSLAV ADÁMEK** graduated from the Faculty of Medicine.



... one of the youngest judges in the Supreme Court of the Czech Republic, **PAVEL HORÁK**. The Faculty of Law alumnus is Head of the Senate of the Civil and Commercial Division.



... director and cameraman **MAREK PARTYŠ**. He graduated from the Faculty of Arts, founding a student TV and production company Pointfilm during his studies. He is the director of many successful commercial spots including videos made for UP, with some 200 000 views on YouTube.



# **Jindřich Štreit**

## Learning more about the world fascinates me

text: Ivana Pustějovská  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

He's unmistakable. A tall man in black with a camera. Perhaps they should name a unit of quality for documentary photography after him – "one štreit". Teacher, curator, photographer. Jindřich Štreit.

— Do you remember the first picture you ever took?

I probably took my first picture when I was eight, when the family went out for a walk. Every Sunday after our favourite kids' radio programme, my father would take the family on a long walk to the Wallachian hills. He was an amateur photographer, and I made an exhibition once of his photographs, long after he passed away. When I was preparing the show I went through the negatives, and found a photograph of the entire family sitting on the grass... except for me. That must mean that I was the one who pressed the shutter release.

— And your first real photograph?

The first was in 1963, when I began to study at the Faculty of Education. One of my professors was Jan Bukovjan, who taught violin. He had a special hobby: he bought and sold cameras. We, his students, had first dibs on them. He offered me a camera right away, when I was a freshman. I had to ask my parents if they could give me the money. My father said: "I'll give you four hundred crowns, but you have to promise me you won't touch a cigarette for ten years." I was quite hurt, because I had never smoked in my life – not before, and not since. I got the money and bought the camera. I took it home, put some film in, and tried it out. I took a shot of the plum tree which was growing there. That was my first photograph.

— You film people in various environments, from villages to iron foundries to social themes. What do you think is their connecting element?

I try to portray social problems. That interests me. I'm not the kind of l'art pour l'art, art for art's sake type of photographer. I try to point out the problems in society. A photographer cannot solve those problems, but he can call attention to them.

— Not only are the environments various, but also the countries where you photograph. Your visual world is however so specific and connected to a knowledge of the environment

from which you come, that it interests me how a photographer can "see" in lands which he does not know thoroughly?

That is a question of interior connection to a specific problem, to a theme. Of course, when I am shooting in Japan, I do not know the Japanese situation in detail. In that case it is rather the visual aspect that inspires me. Everywhere in the world I try to approach people as much as I can and to understand their problems. I try to capture their lives... and their worries. The projects which I am working on in France, in England, in Japan, in Brazil, and elsewhere – these are for the most part long-term, over several months or years. I travelled to Hungary for five years before publishing a book on the puszta (plains). The photographer who wants to really photograph something has to have empathy and be humble toward the people and their environment.

— What does photography give to you? You often photograph people in difficult life situations. It must be difficult to have a relationship to them and to listen to so many life stories of hardship.

It is difficult, but also endlessly interesting and enriching. It can push you a bit further along in your knowledge of life and the world; it can teach you something. Learning more about the world fascinates me: that's why I take pictures. At that same time, I am always happy when the project on which I am working has some purpose. Recently I finished a cycle of photographs from the Klimkovice spa, where I took pictures of children with cerebral palsy. We are trying to alert the Ministry of Health that spa stays for children are necessary, even essential, but they ought to be financially supported by the state. At present these expensive stays are paid for by their parents. It is not the children's fault they have the disease.

— You've made thousands of photographs. Do you still have any photographic desires?

I don't make my living from photography, so I am absolutely free and I only do what interests me. I do not do advertising. I make my own projects or I wait for an opportunity which falls into my lap. When I get an interesting offer, it really makes me happy. I'm pleased when someone calls on me and is interested in my photography.

**Jindřich Štreit (b. 1946)**

He graduated from the UP Faculty of Education, in Art Education. He has had more than 1 200 solo shows, published thirty-four books of photographs and many catalogues. He is represented in the most prestigious world collections, such as MoMA in New York and the National Gallery in Washington. He teaches at the Institute of Creative Photography at Silesian University in Opava. In October 2016 he will have a show at the Olomouc Museum of Modern Art entitled "Unknown Photography, 1978–1989".



# **Iva Machová**

## **I keep an eye on fair play**

text: Martin Višňa  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

Practical experience is priceless for a person preparing for their future profession. For Iva Machová her internship was literally a key moment in her life. She became interested in working with handicapped athletes. Today, in addition to being a trainer, she also supervises as a technical delegate during international competitions.

When she was young, she loved animals and wanted to be a veterinary surgeon. But her family talked her out of it and she gradually became interested in sport. Her older brother would bring her along with him to the stadium, and his trainer eventually took her under his wing. “My brother was also a graduate of Palacký University, and loved Olomouc, he told me about the town and the people he got to know there, legends like Štekr and Zavřel. Olomouc was a relatively easy decision for me,” says Iva Machová.

She began her studies in Physical Education and Mathematics in 1994, but the diploma confirming her success in those areas took eight years. She interrupted her studies after a year, leaving for England to perfect her English. “I was so pig-headed that I allowed my parents only one telephone call per month during the first six months and I forbade them to give my address out to friends, because I really wanted to concentrate on learning English,” the now assistant professor at the Department of Sports remembers with a smile.

### A classical physical education

Prof Hana Válková, who taught until recently at the UP Faculty of Physical Education, is also responsible for “keeping her back” during her studies. Machová during her teacher training had a pupil with cerebral palsy who did not exercise with the rest. After returning from her training, Machová began to delve more into the subject of how to work with such students – and Prof Válková offered her a study stay in Belgium.

“For me it was incredible. Even though I had no experience in applied physical education, such things were not completely out of my reach. I made use there of the basics of anatomy, physiology, and biomechanics I had been taught, and the teachers in Belgium supplied information regarding people with disabilities. Today so many people equate me with the Paralym-

pics and think that I studied applied physical education. I’m just a classically trained physical education teacher, which surprises a lot of people.”

### Memories of Beijing

During the time of the Alumni Reunion at Palacký University she’ll already be on her fourth Paralympics. She joined the team as the trainer of the shot-putter Eva Kacanu right before Athens, where Eva won the silver medal. Four years later in Beijing Eva took home the gold plus a world record. In London, Machová led the discus thrower Rostislav Pohlmann to a silver.

“I think back on Beijing the most. As an aide to a technical delegate, I was supposed to take no sides and be unbiased, so I could not express myself fully, but Eva’s gold – that really hit me. In any case, the cameras captured us behind the scenes, how we celebrated her success. And also a number of athletes finished their careers in Beijing whom I’d become so fond of training in sport for those with disabilities,” explained the successful trainer.

### Guarantor of quality

In the beginning, working with handicapped athletes was of course sobering. The athletes did not know the rules. This persuaded Iva Machová to take a course in being a national technical delegate, who – putting it simply – guarantee contestants a certain quality and fair competition. The teachers then chose her for the team of international technical delegates and now she is one of those who train new delegates for top athletic events. For some time now she has also been a delegate for competitions of athletes without disabilities.

“I like all of my roles, each has something going for it. I guess I am lucky,” she says, but then adds that refereeing competitions is a big responsibility and a difficult role, and also for example that students at the faculty sometimes do not fulfil her expectations.

But Iva Machová had a ready answer for the question of whether she is proud to be a graduate of Palacký University: “Yes, very. For me Olomouc is a true university town and Palacký University creates fine conditions for the people who study here to have an experience which will last their entire lives.”

### Iva Machová (b. 1976)

Assistant professor at the Department of Sports, UP FPC, who teaching Physical Education, and Athletics for People with Disabilities. She graduated in the fields of Physical Education and Mathematics for Middle Schools and completed her doctoral studies in Kinanthropology. She is an athlete, a trainer, and the leader of a team of athletes with disabilities. She is also an international technical delegate and trainer for IPC (International Paralympic Committee) Athletics. In 2008 she was voted Personal Trainer of the Year. In addition to sports, she also likes photography and travel.



# **Karel Indrák**

## Thumbs up for life

text: Věna Mazochová  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

When Karel Indrák was appointed Head of the Department of Clinical Haematology, his workplace had 25 employees, and patients requiring hospitalisation were dispatched to the First Internal Clinic. Today, the Department of Haemato-Oncology is one of the top institutes of haematological care in the Czech Republic. He led the department from its establishment in 1992 to mid-2014 and has devoted his life to its development.

The department has currently a number of specialised laboratories, a transplantation unit, intensive care unit and a standard haematological care unit, plus a large ward with a day care centre. Olomouc thus has become one of the six Czech cities where people suffering from leukaemia, lymphomas, and other malignant disorders of haematopoiesis are provided with a realistic hope for cure.

“Building the department was a demanding process, but I was fortunate in having the full support of the hospital management, the Faculty of Medicine, and an ambitious team, and I was able to influence many important decisions. We acquired new premises, purchased modern equipment, and thanks to national and international cooperation we started to develop programmes on the European level. In 1997 we launched our transplantation unit and carried out our first bone marrow transplants. To date, about 1 200 patients have received these transplants,” says the department head emeritus to sum up the staggering growth of the clinic.

### **We are on the genetic map of the world**

His most important scientific achievements include the discoveries of haemoglobin mutations which cause red blood cell disorders. “I managed to get the Czech Republic on the genetic map of the world depicting haemoglobin disorders. At that time, they were not known to exist in this country. They protect their carriers from the development of malaria and occur mainly in malaria regions around the Mediterranean, in Africa, and Asia. When I identified the disorder in a father and son in Olomouc, I applied to name it Haemoglobin Olomouc – on the basis of the first patient’s place of residence. Another person with Haemoglobin Olomouc lives in Japan.”

In the beginning of the 1990s he left for a year-long internship in the United States, where he gained expertise for more exact

diagnostics of haematopoietic cancers and more, and brought the knowledge back to Olomouc. Capturing and further developing a global trend was made possible by his orientation on the study of genetic causes of oncological disorders.

### **Leukaemia diagnosis not a death sentence anymore**

The efforts to build a top-class haematology department were crowned with more than ordinary success: the patients’ survival rate increased many times over. “The difference is quite radical. Forty years ago, the survival rate of our leukaemia and lymphoma patients was about twenty percent, however many died shortly after being diagnosed, and their final days were rather painful,” says Karel Indrák.

According to him, approximately 80 percent of the patients today have a realistic chance of a cure or prolonging the quality of life. “Our labs allow us to identify the genetic cause and immunological profile of the disease. Targeted treatment tailored to the individual disease has improved the diagnosis of many lymphomas and chronic leukaemias. Thanks to haematopoietic stem cell transplantations we can help even patients with a high risk of relapsed disease or where conventional chemotherapy does not help.”

Announcing the oncologic diagnosis to patients is, according to him, as difficult as ever. Due to state-of-the-art drugs and procedures, however, oncologists can offer a more optimistic prognosis. “Not so long ago the word leukaemia was like giving a thumbs-down to most of the patients. Today we have a large message board at the ward with photographs from weddings, graduations, child births – the cured patients like to spontaneously share their joy with us. Those who still struggle with the disease draw optimism from these messages,” says Indrák. “The majority of oncologic patients have to keep in touch with us practically permanently, because only time will tell whether they have really been cured.”

Despite attractive offers from both domestic and foreign institutions, he has stayed loyal to Olomouc and spent all his professional life at the department. “No other place has really had an appeal for me – I have my roots and my family in Olomouc. And I have eventually managed to achieve everything I hoped for, perhaps even more than I had ever hoped. I’ve been a lucky man,” says Professor Indrák with a smile.

### **Karel Indrák (b. 1947)**

Haematologist of European significance, graduated from the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry. He built up the Department of Haemato-Oncology, a complex clinical-diagnostic institute with a transplantation programme at the Teaching Hospital Olomouc and the Faculty of Medicine. His achievements include the discoveries of new hemoglobinopathies (Haemoglobins Olomouc, Haná, and Hradec Králové) and the identification of thalassemia mutations in the Czech and Slovak population. He initiated the tradition of international Olomouc Haematology Days. He is the founder of the Haimaom Foundation supporting patients after bone marrow transplants.



# Jakub Železný

## Competition is important

text: Milada Hronová, Ivana Pustějovská  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

In the whirl of precipitous events, when one piece of information overrides another and the world of our established certainties seems to be on the brink of collapse, this man always keeps a cool head. Factual, always well-prepared, yet unyielding and never pandering. And professional. Jakub Železný.

— You are one of the most distinct personalities in Czech television journalism. You have witnessed a number of events which have stirred society. How do you perceive the role of the media and journalists today, when anyone can publish anything on social networks and a certain exclusivity of the profession has thus vanished?

Yes, media theory has a nice term for this, a “prosumer”, a producer and consumer of media content in one person. However I do not think the profession’s exclusivity has vanished. It is one thing to watch some videos on the internet – and quite another to require serious and professional content from the serious media. And this will last, I hope.

— Czech society has been undergoing changes, making the transit from enthusiastic optimism to a certain degree of sceptical cynicism. Extremist views are on the increase; there are tendencies to shut oneself off from the world. How do you see it and to what extent can a journalist step back, for the sake of some objectivity?

Every journalist, particularly those employed by the public media, must step back from any political debates and competitions. This is the prerequisite of our work.

On the other hand, we’re obliged – as it is defined in the Czech Television Code of Ethics – to stand on the side of dignity and human rights. And this should say it all.

— You are an expert in history. Do you find a historical parallel to the present situation in the country and in Europe?

I don’t think so. The sad thing is that it seems it was not Fukuyama who was right, but Huntington....

— Not everyone likes to reveal the secrets of their trade. However this does not seem to concern you – you teach future journalists. Are you not worried about training your own competitors?

Oh no, it is extremely important, and I am pleased that the young generation is interested in my experience. It is my duty to pass on all I have learned during almost 25 years on the job – if I have learned anything, of course. And my competition? Very important again. It can help you in self-improvement, so if you see someone really good, you think, oh, I must get even better... And this person may be either a younger or older colleague, age does not matter at all.

— You work with information every day. It would appear there is no more to learn. Yet you are still continuing in further education. Why?

I do it for myself, for the good feeling. One must keep learning and evolving. And I really enjoy it; I need to finish the last few dozen pages of my dissertation, hopefully till the end of this year. It is quite demanding, with all my work....

#### Jakub Železný (b. 1973)

Journalist and television presenter. He graduated in Journalism at the UP Faculty of Arts. His career began in 1993 in Czech Radio. His cooperation with Czech Television started in 1999, where he has hosted his own debate show since 2002. He is the news director at Czech Television and the anchor for the main news programme. He is also an external lecturer at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague.



# Helena Suková

## Everyone must find their own way

text: Ivana Pustějovská  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

She already had a stellar career in sports. In fact, she could easily live off her tennis fame, not doing anything. However she made a different choice. She studied, graduated, and today she works as a psychologist. Helena Suková.

— What makes someone who has achieved the top level in their profession start doing something entirely different after their original career is over? Why psychology?

After finishing my sporting career, I enjoyed the leisure, but after some time it was not fulfilling anymore, so then you begin to look for what's next in your life. The study of Psychology seemed like a new, interesting subject to learn. It did not become my profession until after my studies and the compulsory internship. I realised it feels good to bring relief to someone and perhaps, in collaboration with the client, to help them find a new path in life.

— Top athletes work practically non-stop during their careers. Many of them struggle to find further motivation in life after their career ends. Was this your experience?

When your career is over, you think you will finally enjoy taking some time off, being happy just doing nothing. The opposite is true. If you were used, during your whole life, to have some regime and order, to carry out task and duties, and to follow defined goals, then after some time of idleness you will naturally miss all that. Nonetheless, it is quite complicated to start anew from scratch, because you have been used to the high level of your performance and results, and it is difficult to suddenly accept being “average” in what you do. That's why it's not so easy to find motivation for new things.

— Would you have taken a psychologist's advice during that time?

I was lucky that the idea to study Psychology came in fact from my father's friend – a psychologist. A good psychologist should

not give you advice on what to do. They should be able to work with you in such a way that they bring you to some options and you, as a client, will choose your journey in life on your own. It must be your choice, not your psychologist's.

— What kind of patients do you have? Are there any sportspersons among them?

Eighty percent of my clientele are “non-sporting” people. And when sportspersons come, an overwhelming majority need to cope with issues in their “normal” life, which however affect their performance in sports.

— Which of your life and sporting experiences are helpful in working with clients?

I think I make use of all my experiences in various combinations according to what the client needs. It is an advantage, of course, to be familiar first-hand with some of the pitfalls and problems. On the other hand, there is no guarantee even with all those experiences that you will lead the other person in the direction which is right for them.

— What is the inspiration and motivation for you to carry on?

It is definitely the feedback from my clients. From those who continue coming back for consultations, as well as from those who appreciate our collaboration and deem it beneficial.

— What are your professional plans, what do you want to achieve in your “number two” career?

They say learning is life-long, and I find that true. That's why I try to keep improving and educating myself, in other words working on myself, so that the number of my clients who find my services beneficial increases. Whenever I manage to help someone at least a tiny bit, the feeling of deep satisfaction is irreplaceable.

#### Helena Suková (b. 1965)

One of the most successful tennis players in Czechoslovak history, ranked number 4 in singles in the WTA, a four-time Grand Slam singles runner-up and a Champions Cup singles runner-up, number one in women's doubles, a winner of 14 Grand Slam doubles titles, a Grand Slam doubles winner, a member of the four-time winning team in the Federation Cup (today Fed Cup), and many more. She is a co-founder of the Endowment Fund for Children and Junior Tennis in the Czech Republic. She graduated in Psychology at the UP Faculty of Arts and works as a psychologist in the mental wellness centre Modrá laguna (Blue Lagoon) in Prague under MUDr Jan Cimický.

# UP in the course of time



## AFO introduces unique films and the world's top scientists to Olomouc

Palacký University has been inseparably associated with one of the most significant domestic events in the area of science popularisation – Academia Film Olomouc. This international festival of popular science films has been organised by UP since 1966, making it one of the oldest Czech film festivals. The number of accredited visitors makes AFO one of the largest cinematographic events in the country. According to its organisers, during the last eight years the number of visitors increased roughly tenfold: this year more than 5 500 visitors applied for accreditation.

AFO features the world's best films made recently by prestigious production companies, personally introduced by icons in the Czech and global scientific communities and representatives of the film and television industry. The most prominent AFO guests in recent years have included world-renowned names such as Lawrence M. Krauss, Richard Dawkins, and Marc Van Montagu. The privileged position of the festival in the Czech context was confirmed by the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, awarding AFO with the main prize in the science popularisation competition SCIAP 2015 (Science Approach). (srd)

## UP science centres outperform their Czech rivals

Palacký University has achieved significant achievements in the fields of science and research. Thanks to European funding, three top-notch science centres have been built – the Centre of the Region Haná for Biotechnological and Agricultural research (CRH) and the Regional Centre of Advanced Technologies and Materials (RCPTM), which are located in the premises of the UP Faculty of Science on Šlechtitelů street, and the Institute of Molecular and Translational Medicine (IMTM) of the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry. All three institutes have a marked international character, employing a number of foreign scientists.

The investment into new centres has brought forth fruits: Palacký University has achieved outstanding scores in international university rankings in recent years. This year's Nature Index ranking, which tracks the number of high-quality scientific articles published in selected journals, lists Chemistry in Olomouc as third in the country. And the leading position of Palacký University in scientific publications has been confirmed by the international CWTS Leiden Ranking 2016, where Olomouc's university surpasses other Czech universities in the proportion of highly cited studies.

The science centres have attracted important personalities in world science: RCPTM employs for example the physical chemist Pavel Hobza, who has placed



twice in the top one percent of cited chemists in the world according to Thomson Reuters; IMTM is home to the molecular biologist and global authority in cancer treatment, Jiří Bártek; CRH is where the plant geneticist Jaroslav Doležel operates, whose team significantly contributed to the sequencing of the bread wheat genome. (srd)

## Olomouc city wall ramparts gardens with their unmistakable genius loci

The university building compounds have been undergoing reconstruction; however the transformation also involves their surroundings. The Olomouc city wall ramparts gardens located behind the university buildings on Křížkovského 8–14 (the former Provost's residence and the canonical houses, today's UP Rector's Office and the Faculty of Arts) have been made accessible to the public since 2011. The city wall ramparts gardens are one of the oldest sites in Olomouc, endowed with an unmistakable genius loci. They were built during the 15th and 16th centuries and at present are both a pass from the uni to the park and halls of residence below, and a multi-functional area used by UP teachers and students as well as Olomouc residents as a comfortable place for relaxation and socialising. Together with Olomouc's parks, they are part of the green ring surrounding the historical town centre. The revitalisation of the gardens was made possible thanks to the European Union, Palacký University, and the City of Olomouc. (map)



## The Fortress of Knowledge: Science through play

The past and the future under one roof: this is the Fortress of Knowledge, the interactive science museum at Palacký University Olomouc. This architecturally unique building with wooden construction in the premises of the Crown Fortress was still an inseparable part of the Olomouc bastion fortifications in 1857. In 2015, this former military storehouse was trans-



formed into a progressive science museum, whose goal is to popularise science and research to all generations in an entertaining way. Once you open the gates of the Fortress of Knowledge, enthusiastic guides will lead you through five interactive exhibitions with dozens of original exhibits made in the UP Faculty of Science. You will learn the most fascinating details on the history of besieging Olomouc, behold the whole nervous system in its complicated beauty, and marvel at the thrilling films in the digital planetarium. The Fortress of Knowledge is not only a sanctuary of education, but also an inspirational environment for the general public. It is open from Tuesday to Sunday, 9 am to 5 pm, and to 6 pm during weekends. See more at [www.pevnost-poznani.cz](http://www.pevnost-poznani.cz). (vys)

## Arts in the Convictorium



In the past one of the most dilapidated buildings in the city centre, where soldiers had been housed, today is a prominent landmark thriving with arts and culture – this is how the former Jesuit Convictorium, the UP Arts Centre has transformed in time. Palacký University acquired and reconstructed the devastated Baroque compound in the 1990s. The current Arts Centre encompasses lecture halls, specialised classrooms, studios, ateliers, and a theatre and cinema. It is home to the Art and Art Education departments of the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Education. The Convictorium, boasting the magnificent Corpus Christi Chapel, does not serve the university only: it has become a venue where many other cultural events take place – exhibitions, concerts and festivals open to the general public and visitors. (ipu)

## Comenius's vision fulfilled in the Armoury

The University took over the former Theresian artillery armoury from the army, and converted the largest part of it to house publications from the UP book collection, in perfect accordance with the motto by the famous Czech pedagogue, John Amos Comenius: “Make libraries from armouries”, which is now engraved in its courtyard's paving. The Armoury provides library and information services as well as space for cultural and educational activities, an important community centre and a perfect place for student meetings. The large reconstructed compound, one of the most noteworthy sights of Olomouc, also shelters the UP Press, Information Technology Centre, Audio-Visual Services, and popular Coffee Library. (mav)



## Age is no obstacle to studies

To return to one's alma mater as a student once again.... Such a dream can be fulfilled at UP. Not much is needed. Only two conditions have to be met: to be at least fifty years old and to apply to the University of the Third Age (U3A).

“All our faculties are engaged in the preparations and teaching. Applicants may choose between 16 specialised programmes,” clarified the head of the U3A, Naděžda Špatenková. The most popular “disciplines” include European Culture and Christianity; Movement – The Path to Health; People in Health and Illness; Chapters from Czech History; Psychosocial Studies; and Protection of the Individual and their Rights.

Olomouc's university started the programme of education for seniors exactly thirty years ago – the first institute in the country to do so.

How to fulfil your dreams and become a university student once again? The U3A office accepts applications for study continually until the capacity is reached, usually to the end of May. More information on study at the U3A is available at [www.u3v.upol.cz](http://www.u3v.upol.cz). (eha)





# **Jarmila Podhorná**

## Everyone needs hope

text: Ivana Pustějovská  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

She launched her business in retirement, after she stopped teaching. She started making herbal remedies out of plant buds – on her own, in her house’s cellar in a small village near Prostějov. Today, in the same village, Brodek u Konice, she has several business premises, a lecture centre with a shop, herbal garden, a unique arboretum, and thirty employees. She trades with European companies, and her products are popular in Japan in Canada. The gemmotherapist Jarmila Podhorná.

— You spent dozens of years teaching. When it was your time to relax, you started your own private business. Why?

I have always been interested in everything concerning the human body and health and also nature. When I was a teacher, I always paid attention to my pupils’ health and took an interest in what caused certain conditions. There were certain health problems in my own family, and I had always wondered how to help. I studied how the human body works and collected information from alternative medicine. Then I retired and realised I’d like to pass on what I know to others. At the same time I wanted to do something that would help people. And I was very fortunate, since I had been attending courses in natural healing, where Jiří Janča, the herbal therapist, had lectures. It was Janča who mentioned one day that if someone started making tinctures from our herbs, such herbal remedies would be considerably better than anything imported. I became so fascinated that I made a small lab out of our cellar and started testing what could be produced and what might be the effect. That was very important, to know not only why, but also what for. My first experiments were made with St John’s wort. I found out that the tincture works for relaxation, against insomnia, against inflammation, and there was even a case of a person whose multiple sclerosis mildly improved. This was the moment when I knew I was on the right path.

— So this was the decisive moment?

Well, one of them. There was also a person living nearby who struggled with Lyme disease. So I was looking for a remedy and found out that poplar buds, if processed, help the body to fight this disease. By the way, since the first trials to date, this particular therapy has helped thousands of people.

— We are standing in a newly planted park with hundreds of trees, while new premises are being prepared nearby. What keeps pushing you forward?

I wanted to help people from the very beginning. And once you make such a decision, it keeps pushing you forward. One thing follows another. Gemmotherapy helps to moderate some health problems, it is good for overall regeneration, and the extracts are also used in cosmetics. When we discovered the range of possibilities in gemmotherapy, we had to adjust our production, grow more herbs, including various exotic species, then we had to ensure the necessary equipment, real estate, buildings, and so on. Then I made another decision – to create a unique orchard with trees for bud harvest. It is a huge project, unparalleled anywhere in the world, and that means further development. I am also immensely interested in the regeneration of the body, so I want to establish a regeneration centre where people would learn how to take care of themselves. We should try to prevent civilisation diseases. Life should have a certain quality, and when we reach a higher age, we must try hard to be able to look after ourselves and still be active. For when you are still doing something, when you are still creative and active, life is meaningful. I can see that in myself.

— You trade with the whole world. Yet every day you must deal with email from hundreds of people asking for advice, and every year you hold dozens of lectures. Why all that, after achieving success abroad?

It is because in everything I do, I want to help people. I think they need a great deal of help. Sometimes when I’m tired, when I’m truly knackered, I go to my office. I have four big files, full of letters from people who tell me how my tinctures helped them. They are sharing their whole life stories. And when you read them and you see how you are really helping people, then you cannot call it quits.

— Why did you name your company Naděje – “Hope”?

Everyone needs hope. Those who have lost hope are coming to me and saying, “You give us hope.”

**Jarmila Podhorná (b. 1944)**

A herbalist and gemmotherapist, the founder and owner of the company Naděje, graduated from the Faculty of Education in Biology and Agricultural Production. Her company specialises in the production of herbal tinctures, gemmotherapeutics, ointments, oils, and extracts. She was awarded 2010 Olomouc Region Entrepreneur of the Year for her achievements, and placed second in the national competition. In 2013, she received the award Marketer of the Year.



# **Robert Knebel**

## World champ builds children's playgrounds

text: Martin Višňa  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

Robert Knebel, president of the UP canoeing team, has been dubbed a “canoeing legend” by journalists, but he doesn’t feel like one. He also doesn’t speak much about winning the World Championships at the turn of the millennium – he would rather train his successors and help the Olomouc team than rest on his laurels or gaze at his trophies.

“We had a lot of trophies at home, because my wife also competes. When we renovated our house, I suggested a display case in the garage. Finally we just left five or six cups on display, into which we and our daughters leave small change – like piggybanks,” revealed Knebel.

Like many other canoeists, he is connected to the Department of Recreation. He graduated in 1998. Originally, in 1991 – the first year of the Faculty of Physical Culture’s existence – he entered as a double major in Physical Culture and Maths. As he says himself, that soon ended, because he did not have a head for figures. He then applied for Recreation and was accepted and satisfied there.

### Proud recreation expert

“In my opinion, Recreation at that time was more about creativity than it is now – creativity went into everything. For example we ran a ropes course in the woods for a children’s camp and other non-traditional activities, which at that time were simply not done. I remember those days fondly, even though they were of course accompanied with many conflicts academically. But the majority of the lecturers understood that we were not a traditional class. I think that at that time there was a group of interesting people who had a specific approach to their studies, which resulted in a number of us doing lifelong work which is quite creative,” reminisces Knebel on his student days.

And he adds: “Even though I don’t entirely agree with the direction Recreation is taking today, when somebody mentions the name of the field, I still feel that they are speaking about me – that that is me. I am proud to be a recreation expert, and I am glad that I met people at the faculty who have made a difference in my life – both the teachers, led by Jaroslav Bokůvka, and my fellow students.”

### Slalom course as opportunity

While still a student, Jiří Kratochvíl offered Robert Knebel the chance to help train juniors, and in 2000 he became the

head trainer for the senior canoeing team. He himself was still competing at that time – it was then when he won the three world championships in teams and had other individual successes. He stopped competing in 2004, and devoted himself only to training. “The fact that so many people have trained under me who compete and even become trainers themselves makes me happy, as well as the fact that our discipline, which was still in nappies in 1993, is now a system which works,” Knebel replied, when asked what he considers his greatest success.

And this opinion should not change, even after construction of the envisioned water sports canal in the town centre, which has been under discussion for some time. Even though he is the director of the division connected to the project for the artificial canoe slalom course, he himself is a wildwater kayaker. “Most likely the number of people who will do slalom will increase, I also see it as a huge opportunity to show that we trainers, who devote themselves to a non-Olympic sport, are able to compete with the Olympic slalom,” he believes.

### Non-traditional playgrounds

Robert Knebel’s life is not only connected with canoeing. In the time when he lived with his parents in Ostrava, he was also a competition swimmer. This was the most difficult experience for him in his career in sports, a kind of “shock” treatment. And when he thinks about that, it’s not about the swimming training, but the scary bus rides to the pool on buses full of miners on their way to the pits.

This is however all behind him; Knebel’s activities outside the world of canoeing are connected with children. Together with his wife, also a graduate in Recreation, he builds non-traditional children’s playgrounds. “This was mainly my wife’s dream, she wrote her thesis on initiative games for children. We even ran an indoor playground in Olomouc-Neředín for a time, when my wife was teaching courses for mothers with children. While we started out mostly building stuff for our daughters at our cottage, now we make all kinds of tree-houses, water playgrounds, and even huge sandboxes. But we haven’t done too many public projects, because we are not the cheapest,” Robert Knebel adds with a smile. The competition canoeist inside him is still in charge....

### Robert Knebel (b. 1971)

Canoeing trainer, and President of the UP Canoeing Team, head trainer for the Czech national wildwater canoeing team. He was also a competition swimmer until the age of fourteen, and he has trained on the waters in Olomouc since his last year in gymnasium. He is a graduate of the Department of Recreation, UP Faculty of Physical Culture. His is three-time world champion in wildwater team canoeing, and a winner of the World Cup. Together with his wife, he builds children’s playgrounds.



# **Jiří Bártek**

## Research is a fascinating “drug”

text: Věna Mazochová  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

Since his breakthrough discovery of the mechanism of how cells activate their response against their own tumour transformations, he has been mentioned as a potential candidate for the Nobel Prize. Professor Jiří Bártek.

#### — How did medical science captivate you?

The research on the cellular and molecular level captivated me as early as during my studies at the Faculty of Medicine. To understand the processes in the cells and what causes pathological changes leading to diseases such as cancer has been a great and fascinating adventure for me. The feeling that you have solved a molecular mystery of some previously unexplored cell mechanism and that the acquired knowledge may facilitate the treatment of serious diseases can hardly match the satisfaction from any other human activity, in my opinion. Even after many years of research, the fascination with laboratory research is still a very effective “drug” for me, a source of joy and sometimes even sleepless nights over a hard-to-solve problem.

#### — How long is the journey from cell cycle research to efficient help for cancer patients?

In my case it depends on what kind of help for patients we have in mind. Relatively quickly, during the several years since the beginning of our research, we have managed to prepare monoclonal antibodies, which are used in differential diagnostics of tumour diseases. Other antibodies and some of the mechanisms we have described seem to be promising in terms of helping physicians in the choice of the therapy – because our work results in identifying biomarkers, that is, molecular markers in individual tumours. The biomarkers should indicate whether the given tumour will be sensitive, or on the contrary resistant, to a certain type of chemotherapy, for example. The process from the discovery of a new molecular mechanism all the way to the design and clinical testing of a new type of treatment however may take decades, and there is no guarantee it will be successful in reality. We are very fortunate: several of the molecular-biological principles we have discovered are now being tested in clinical trials in various countries. We are also trying to speed up the tenuous journey to new treatments by means of using drugs

commonly used, for example, in parasitology or psychiatry for treatment of other than tumorous diseases in order to affect the newly discovered “weak points” in tumour cells.

#### — What must a scientist sacrifice in order to make advancements in scientific knowledge?

Good scientific work requires, first of all, a huge amount of time. It cannot be made during “normal” working hours. You often have to work for ten or fifteen hours daily, including weekends, with minimal or no holidays at all. But it can be done, and you are rewarded with a successful test or an idea that came through by sunrise after a sleepless night. The help of your family is extremely important, especially in families with kids, which is also our case. Most of all, the majority of scientists do not do their work as a means of making their living, but rather as their hobby. They are highly motivated by their desire for knowledge, and all new findings are a “sweet reward” for them. So despite being restrained in certain ways, we do not suffer significantly; only perhaps there could be less of the metastasised bureaucracy and excessively limiting rules, and more financial support. Science would benefit from both tremendously.

#### — What would be the fulfilment of your scientific dream?

It has been fulfilled partially by having discovered, with my team, several biological mechanisms or even principles, which are now being further developed in many laboratories across the world. This has been reflected in the high citation index of our results. I still have hope that we will be able to complete, within the foreseeable future, one of our important conceptual discoveries up to its application in the form of a new treatment for tumorous diseases. Another former dream has started to be fulfilled – to see my students and younger colleagues who began or “matured” in one of my laboratories making achievements in science. It gives me a good feeling that the baton of research has been passed into the hands of a new generation, which will continue in making new discoveries and finding their applications in medicine. This however does not mean that I don’t have many plans and ideas for my own work, which I am very looking forward to doing.

#### Jiří Bártek (b. 1953)

A graduate from the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, and Director of the Genome Integrity Unit at the Danish Cancer Society Research Centre in Copenhagen, Jiří Bártek is on the cutting edge of basic biomedical research worldwide. He has been focussed mainly on the research of regulatory mechanisms of tumour cell division and also mechanisms leading to tumour development. Prof Bártek has been employed by several prestigious European research laboratories for many years, and also leads one of the teams at the Institute of Molecular and Translational Medicine in Olomouc. He is the most cited scientist of Czech origin in the field of biological and medicinal sciences.



# **Martin Povejšil**

## Change is inspiring

text: Ivana Pustějovská  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

Santiago, Madrid, Brussels. Everywhere he has been he has still been “home”. Translator, diplomat, ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the European Union. Martin Povejšil.

The Prague native ended up in Moravia by a chain of events. When he wanted to attend the university in Prague in 1980, he was not accepted. He did not squander the next year, however. He found himself a job and studied English intensively. “And because they made it clear to me in Prague that I had no chance to get into the university there, even in the future, I applied to Olomouc.”

He entered the UP Faculty of Arts and chose Modern Philology – English and Spanish. “My father taught German, so I grew up in a multilingual environment. At home we would listen to the Austrian or German news radio over breakfast,” says the diplomat, who can speak English, Spanish, German, Russian, and French.

### **No longer any reason to be ashamed**

When the changes came in 1989, he was skilled in languages and prepared to try new things. He sent out many CVs. One of them was addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “Suddenly 1990 was the moment when all of the places wrote me back saying they were interested.” Then came the moment of decision. “Overwhelmed by the ethos of the time, I came to the realisation: This is the first time when you do not have to be ashamed of your country, and now you can do something meaningful for it. And so I went to the Černín Palace in Prague where they were hiring for the foreign ministry. They accepted only two of us: myself and Martin Stropnický, the current Czech Minister of Defence. We were the first two who were not hand-chosen by the elite members of the newly-ruling Citizen’s Forum party, and that’s how we entered the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry,” Martin Povejšil says, recapping the decisive moment of his career.

In 1991 he entered the foreign ministry, at that time Czechoslovak, and later just Czech. He was gradually put in charge of various departments and sections concerned with Asia, Africa, and most of all Latin America.

### **A diplomat must be fearless**

Later in the mid-1990s, when he was offered a post as ambassador, he chose Chile. After a few years he returned, helping to ne-

gotiate the Czech Republic’s entrance into the EU. Then he was sent on another mission to Spain and Andorra. And then back to Prague, where for several years he dedicated himself to security issues and multilateral diplomacy. In 2009 he became the ambassador to NATO. His last job change came in 2012: he is now the Czech Permanent Representative to the EU.

“You have to have a sense of reality regarding what the country which you are representing needs and what it can do. You have to see things in the wider foreign political context, and perceive what the realistic possibilities are for your country in the given territory. And you should not over- nor under-estimate them. You cannot be afraid to go into an unknown terrain and build contacts there. It is also necessary to clearly see what the basic axes are which form the content of your work, in order for your endeavours to have direction and some sense. It is quite a difficult profession, because in the moment when you lose contact with reality, then you find yourself on thin ice, and it might be that you are pulling the cart in a different direction than it wants to go. It can lead to your own frustration, or to the loss of your position in the entire system of foreign service,” Povejšil says, summarising his experiences. He adds however that he’s been lucky in his career. “I have been able to go from the periphery of foreign politics to its centre. I think that’s proper career progress.”

But climbing the career ladder is not his only motivation. “What I really love about my work and find truly challenging is how every position is temporary. That temporal limitation forces you to keep moving forward – to learn new things, to overcome unexpected barriers. The result is endlessly inspiring work, which keeps you in a certain rhythm.” In order to keep things together, a person needs to relax and have the right conditions. “While I don’t have much time, I try to keep up with my reading – something other than memorandums – and do some sports. But I couldn’t do it without the huge support I have in my family and without my kids.” When speaking of the future, he is diplomatic. “In my profession, there is no point in planning for the future. There are too many changes which influence each other. But it is good to be prepared for new challenges. And to handle them when they come.”

### **Martin Povejšil (b. 1961)**

Ambassador. He studied Modern Philology at UP. In 1990 he began his career in what was then the Czechoslovak diplomatic corps. During his career he has occupied a number of senior posts in the Czechoslovak and later Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs and at embassies abroad. At present he is the Director of the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU.



# **Ivana Cinková**

## **What do rhinos say to each other?**

text: Martina Šaradínová  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

As a small girl she fell for Africa, and when she enrolled at the UP Faculty of Science, her aim was to study rhinos. The young scientist Ivana Cinková has a new goal today – to understand the vocal and olfactory communication of the southern white and the northern white rhinoceros and to utilise her findings in better caring for these highly endangered species in captivity.

The 33-year-old zoologist has gained renown in her field, having published in prominent scientific journals. Cinková spends several months annually in the African wilderness, where she tracks the rhinos, replaces their dung, records their voices, and monitors their responses to the playback. Her first trip to the “dark continent” was made because of her Master’s thesis. She had focussed on the social behaviour of the rhinos in her Bachelor’s thesis, but she could “only” monitor the rhinos in the Dvůr Králové Zoo.

“*Ceratotherium simum simum* and *Ceratotherium simum cottoni* have the most developed social system among the six existing rhinoceros species, and the communication of these animals has been a mystery until very recently. Their vocal repertory is quite extensive, and they use olfactory communication to a great extent – the males mark their territorial boundaries with urine and excrement. My childhood dream came true when I began studying the rhinos’ social behaviour and communication eleven years ago,” said Cinková.

### What do rhinos talk about?

These two rhino species are the only ones to use their voices for contact. The animals most usually use them to greet each other when individuals from different groups meet, or to call each other when lost. The scientist recorded hundreds of their vocal expressions and is able to determine whether the recorded animal is dominant, whether it is young or old, isolated or in its group. This is also why this native of Litomyšl can say she understands these pachyderms well. She grew fond of these huge creatures, even though being around them in the wilderness has its dangers. “When you come to know them better, you realise they are very cute animals,” claims the zoologist resolutely. While during her first trip to Africa she used the services of a lo-

cal tracker, now she takes these journeys for knowledge on her own. She is planning to undertake another expedition to South Africa this year.

While still a student, she played the recorded contact voices to the animals in the wild. “The territorial males responded most intensely. They ran to the loudspeaker and marked their territory, trying to locate the animal that emitted the sound. It is obvious that voices stimulate their social behaviour. This is actually how I found the theme for my Master’s thesis,” explained Cinková, who also investigated into the olfactory communication of the animals. She placed outsiders’ dung at other dung heaps and then monitored the rhinos’ response.

### Supporting animal communication in the zoo

Rhinos are capable of retrieving all kinds of information from the voice and the dung, such as the other animal’s sex and whether it is a stranger or not. Rhinos also seem to be able to recognise the differences in the voices of both species. The findings concerning their vocal and olfactory communication may have a significant role in the zoos where rhinos are raised. They reproduce poorly in captivity, for unknown reasons. According to Cinková, one of the reasons may be their need for social communication. However, they live in rather small groups in zoos, receiving very little social stimuli. “Our hope is that they might be aided in reproduction by receiving stimuli through the recordings or signals in urine or stools. We could stimulate them similarly as we do with some domestic animals,” the scientist stated.

It is high time for her hypothesis to be confirmed. There are only three remaining northern white rhinos in the world. Four of them were relocated from the Dvůr Králové Zoo to Kenya in 2009, where only two females and one male are still alive. None of these animals, however, are capable of natural reproduction, so the only hope for saving this species lies in the methods of artificial reproduction and genetic engineering. The number of southern white rhinos is estimated at 20 000, but they are constantly jeopardized by poacher raids. In the course of the last four years, poachers have killed more than 4 000 of these creatures.

### Ivana Cinková (b. 1983)

After graduating from the Alois Jirásek Gymnasium in Litomyšl, she graduated in Zoology from the UP Faculty of Science. Currently employed as a researcher at the Department of Zoology, she is a laureate of the UP Faculty of Science Dean’s Award and UP Rector’s Prize.



# **Jaroslav Knichal**

## Talks always end in forgiveness

text: Milada Hronová  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

When the world's philosophers start discussing human life, they often speak about death. They say that when one is actually facing death, a person understands so much more about the value of life. And so too soldiers, who undergo tense moments on foreign missions. And a number of these ponder the fragility of life in the presence of the Chief Chaplain of the Czech Armed Forces, Jaroslav Knichal.

— Your family was partly responsible for your decision to study Theology – what path led you into the armed forces?

It started to develop immediately after studying at the Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology, where I had to do a year of military service. At that time I was looking for a way how an ordained priest could be useful in the armed forces. I met with the first post-1989 Czech military chaplain, Tomáš Holub, and his colleague Josef Konečný. I was offered a four-year position to further their ranks in the armed forces.

— Did you not see a contradiction between being a clergyman and at the same time a soldier?

Of course, at first. When however I delved deeper into what it means to serve as a military chaplain, I stopped thinking about this problem. I am there to serve people who wear the uniform and live in a specific environment. Their country has sent them abroad, in order to complete certain tasks. Far from their families, from everything that is near and dear to them. It was actually on a foreign mission when I understood how necessary the position of military chaplain is. How important it is to know how to listen to soldiers, and support them in order that they can fulfil their service duties one hundred percent.

— And what about the Fifth Commandment: Thou shalt not kill?

Even regarding the Fifth Commandment it is said that in the tensest moments one may choose the most extreme measures in self-defence. The awareness that the people and property for which you are responsible are suddenly under threat makes it possible for one to defend oneself in the ultimate situation in the ultimate way. Obviously one is confronted with this question constantly on missions with soldiers.

— And what do you often think about?

Actually about those invisible borderlines. I am constantly looking for some kind of balance between necessary help for those in need and protecting those who have been entrusted to me. The work of a chaplain is to serve, to the fullest extent of what service means.

— Don't you seem sometimes to be rather a psychotherapist?

It's true that we use comparable methods. But there are situations when we go our separate ways. The advantage of the chaplain is the confessional and also that every talk always ends with God's forgiveness. That is something you will not get at a psychotherapist. People need calming, in order to carry on.

— Logar in Afghanistan was your fourth mission. Are you headed for others?

I was in Iraq, Kosovo, and twice in Afghanistan. The two missions in Afghanistan were definitely dangerous. There are 31 male chaplains and one female chaplain in the Czech armed forces, and I am of the opinion that each one of them ought to take part in at least one foreign operation. Being on equal terms, they should experience the atmosphere of everything that goes on in a mission. The work of the head chaplain is rather managerial; I will not be going on new missions.

— Did your time spent on missions have a big influence on you?

Huge. In every mission you are living for six months in a tiny space, very far from home, and with the same people. You see the poverty surrounding you and there is always the threat of death. The topic of death came up in that very time when the base was under fire, and we were sitting in the bunker. Sometimes we debated about death, at other times the bunker was completely quiet, until you heard a faint, "Padre, pray out loud, so we can hear you..." And while I am a believer, some of my views on life were changed thanks to being on missions. I was forced to reconcile with the fact that I could die. Tell me, who other than a chaplain should resolve that question for soldiers?

**Jaroslav Knichal (b. 1976)**

Colonel, Catholic priest, Chief Chaplain of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic. He graduated from UP CMTF in 2000. In 2003 he became the military chaplain of the 7th Mechanised Brigade; in June 2015 he became the Chief Chaplain of the Czech armed forces. He has taken part in four foreign operations – in Iraq, Kosovo, and twice in Afghanistan.

# Endowment Fund: Opportunity for talented students

*The UP Endowment Fund has given support to Jaroslava Šeflová.*



text: Ivana Pustějovská  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

They are young, talented, and one day may save the world. However, first of all they must get their chance – all the talented students, young scientists, who are supported by the Palacký University Endowment Fund (EF). It was established in 2015 and it is a project unparalleled in the Czech Republic: it is the first and so far the only such fund in operation at Czech universities.

The aim of the UP Endowment Fund is to create propitious conditions to support important scholarly and artistic projects by talented students of Palacký University. Its partner, Česká spořitelna bank, provided a €30 000 contribution to support young science again, for the second time.

### **We trust our students**

How does the Fund work in reality? It is simple: a student has a project that he or she would like to realise. They lack money – for an internship abroad, for airfare.... And this money can be obtained from the EF. The student need only be able to carry through and defend their projects. If they succeed, they may receive up to €7 500. The size of contributions, distributed by the EF Board of Directors, depends on the type of research, its difficulty, and international impact, as well as the students' ability to explain the idea behind the project and its results in a clear and comprehensible manner. "We trust in students whom we support. However high-quality project results are required. They need to have the ability to reflect upon their work and present the benefits of their research to the public. On the other hand, minimal administration and accounting are required," explains the UP Endowment Fund Coordinator, Dita Palaščíková.

The contribution from the Fund is granted for one year. During this time, it is necessary to implement the supported project and prepare the results they agreed to deliver in their application. During the two years of the Fund's existence, nearly one hundred

young scientists have applied. Approximately one dozen received support per year.

### **We change the world**

A rarity among them is Jaroslava Šeflová, a student of the Faculty of Science. This talented doctoral student of the Department of Biophysics succeeded twice in a row. During her studies she began to explore the world of proteins by means of optical spectroscopy methods and then applied the knowledge in the study of Na<sup>+</sup>/K<sup>+</sup>-AT-Pase and its mutations, which are associated with neurological disorders. "Thanks to the UP Endowment Fund contribution I could carry on with the project in collaboration with a laboratory in Aarhus, Denmark. I have gained a great amount of experience during my work, met new colleagues, and tried out working in a team at a top-notch workplace. I also appreciate the opportunity to receive funding for my research project on my own, which is a very valuable lesson," says the young scientist. Other supported students, for instance, travelled to China in order to prepare a unique Czech-Chinese technical dictionary, while others decided to help endangered children in Zambia, etc.

Such an endowment fund is a novelty in the Czech context, however it is an established model in the world. It supports young people of talent and reinforces community awareness. It is common for successful university alumni at the top of their career to offer a helping hand to their successors and become proud donors. The UP Endowment Fund seeks to follow a similar path of creating a community of people who can support each other. "The world around us is full of mysteries and challenges, the keys for which will probably be found by the following generations. So if today someone successful endows someone who is at the beginning of their career with such an opportunity, perhaps together they will change the world," adds Dita Palaščíková.

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## **We are not afraid of being different**

*The UP Endowment Fund is unique within the Czech Republic. We strive to establish mutually beneficial partnerships with companies and individuals who share the visions and principles of the Fund.*

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2

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21  
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4  
819

students awarded  
degrees

30  
193

submitted  
applications  
for study

245

academic workers  
with foreign  
citizenship

9

professors  
named in 2015

22

docents  
habilitated in 2015

16  
208

students receiving  
stipends in 2015

4  
820

beds in student houses  
of residence

545  
624

main courses  
served in 2015

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courses in lifelong  
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