

In memoriam

Marijana Zekić-Sušac 1967-2020.

by Josip Mesarić



Our community lost a pillar on July 7 when Prof.dr.sc. Marijana Zekić-Sušac passed away from serious illness. She is survived by her husband Denis and her sons Ivan and Petar.

Marijana Zekić-Sušac was born in 1967 in Belišće, Croatia. She graduated in 1990 at the University of Osijek, Faculty of Economics in Osijek. She has been developing her scientific research and teaching career at the Faculty of Economics since 1991. In 1995, she defended her master's thesis entitled "Meta-model of an intelligent system for decision support in companies" at the Faculty of Organization and Informatics in Varaždin. In 2000, she obtained her doctorate at the same faculty with a dissertation entitled "Neural Networks in Predicting Investment Profitability".

Through continuous scientific and teaching work, she acquired university titles, from assistant professor in 2003 to full professor in 2017. In addition, she has earned numerous scientific and professional trainings. She also earned Fulbright scholarship for pre-doctoral research. In 2011 and 2016, she received award for her exceptional contribution to science and teaching and dedicated work and personal contribution to the development of the Faculty of Economics in Osijek. She was president of Departments of Quantitative Methods and Informatics at the Faculty of Economics in Osijek. She also was the president of the scientific-professional association Croatian Society for Operational Research (HDOI). She was a member of several professional associations such as International Neural Networks Society (INNS), Croatian Society for Operational Research (HDOI) and Croatian Statistical Society (HSD) She was a member of prominent professional associations (AIS, IEEE, ACM). She has held duties and membership in the editorial boards of scientific and professional journals, proceedings, etc. (Croatian Operational Research Review (CRORR), Central European Journal of Operational Resarch - CEJOR, Ekonomski vjesnik - EconView and editor of the Proceedings of the International Conference on Operational Research).

She has been a collaborator on several national and international research projects and the leader of the still active project "Methodological framework for efficient energy management by intelligent data analytics" funded by the Croatian Science Foundation. She has published more than 70 scientific papers in journals and other editions indexed in highly cited databases. Her scientific work included world-renowned scientific research in the field of artificial intelligence - neural networks and machine learning, as well as simulations in various fields of economic practice. That is why she was invited as a lecturer at eminent scientific conferences and workshops.

Her scientific curiosity, analytical capabilities, focus and tenacity in the consistent application of scientific methods have led to results that explain complex scientific phenomena on the one hand, and predict their behaviors on the other. Her beliefs in the benefits of human knowledge, understanding the complex mechanisms of its formation and the constant generation of new knowledge have brought her into the field of artificial intelligence - first to the field of neural networks and then machine learning and deep learning in recent times. Although the results of her research secured her the status of a top researcher, she continued her tireless research almost until the last days of her life.

Marijana was (co)author of three university textbook and four authorized lectures on Business Informatics, Business applications development, Business Intelligence, Digital Economy, Business Simulations and ICT in Banking.

We will remember her the most for the gentleness and smile with which she approached people, but also for her deep tenancy and faith in achievements when she set out to solve a problem. She was a quiet worker, with strong convictions and high moral values. She was a reliable collaborator, but also an excellent leader who motivated the team. On her legacy, a generation of young researchers will be able to continue their research.