An elegant molecule and a celebrated polymer chemist

by Igor Lacík, Polymer Division Vice-President, and Christine Luscombe, Polymer Division President

This year, Prof. Pavel Kratochvíl celebrated his 90th birthday (born 6 Feb 1930). To mark this occasion, the Polymer Division organized a special celebration for him working closely with Mrs. Daniela Illnerova from the Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry in Prague. We created a IUPAC Polymer Division plaque and a card signed by all living Past Presidents, current President, and Vice-President. Mrs. Illnerova arranged that the plaque be presented to Prof. Kratochvíl during the play "An elegant molecule," the hit of the season at the Dejvice theatre in Prague. The play is about another outstanding Czech chemist Prof. Antonín Holý, who in the 90s synthesized the molecules against viral infections such as HIV and Hepatitis B. Even today, these inventions bring in tens of millions of Euros annually in royalties to the Institute of Organic and Bioorganic Chemistry AS CR by Gilead in California reflecting a true success story of how chemistry can help mankind. The play is somewhat closely related to Prof. Kratochvíl's life since he was the Director of the Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry of the Academy of Sciences of Czech Republic in Prague (IMC AS CR) at the same time when Prof. Holý was the Director of his

Institute. Prof. Kratochvíl can compare the play with his personal experience.

As soon as the first burst of COVID-19 decayed and the theatres in Prague reopened in the beginning of June 2020, the Polymer Division Vice-President Dr. Igor Lacík was able to visit Prague. On 12 June, at the Dejvice Theatre, the plaque was presented to Prof. Kratochvíl on behalf of the Division. It was a memorable occasion. The art director of the theatre Mr. Martin Mysicka, featured in the role of Antonín Holý, introduced Prof. Kratochvíl, Dr. Lacík, and the IUPAC Polymer Division prior to the play and announced that this play would be dedicated to Prof. Kratochvíl. Then, Prof. Kratochvíl was invited on stage, and Dr. Lacík handed the plaque to him (both wearing masks reflecting current times due to COVID-19). During the standing ovations after the play, all actors and audience applauded Prof. Kratochvíl, which was highly emotional.

This story reflects the life of the IUPAC Polymer Division, the connection between generations and appreciation of our peers, such as Prof. Kratochvíl, for their work for the Division.

The IUPAC mission could not be achieved without involvement of numerous scientists around the world, nor without their wisdom, vision and dedication. Prof. Pavel Kratochvíl, from the IMC AS CR, is one of those who contributed significantly to the life of IUPAC and its Polymer Division. Prof. Pavel Kratochvíl was mainly involved in the former Committee on Nomenclature,

and has continued to influence the Polymer Division for many years. More details on his scientific achievements and the roles in the IUPAC can be found in the tribute by Michael Hess and Máximo Barón marking the occasion of his 80th birthday. (*CI* 2011, Vol. 33(2), p. 21, http://publications.iupac.org/publications/ci/2011/3302/iw6_tribute-kratochvil.html). This year, Prof. Kratochvíl was also elected Emeritus Fellow of the Polymer Division as the recognition earned by his service for IUPAC.

Igor Lacík presents Prof. Pavel Kratochvíl with an award to celebrate his 90th birthday as Martin Mysicka (as Antonín Holý) in Dejvice Theatre. The plaque was presented to Kratochvíl during the play "An Elegant Molecule," about the work of Holý, another outstanding Czech chemist.