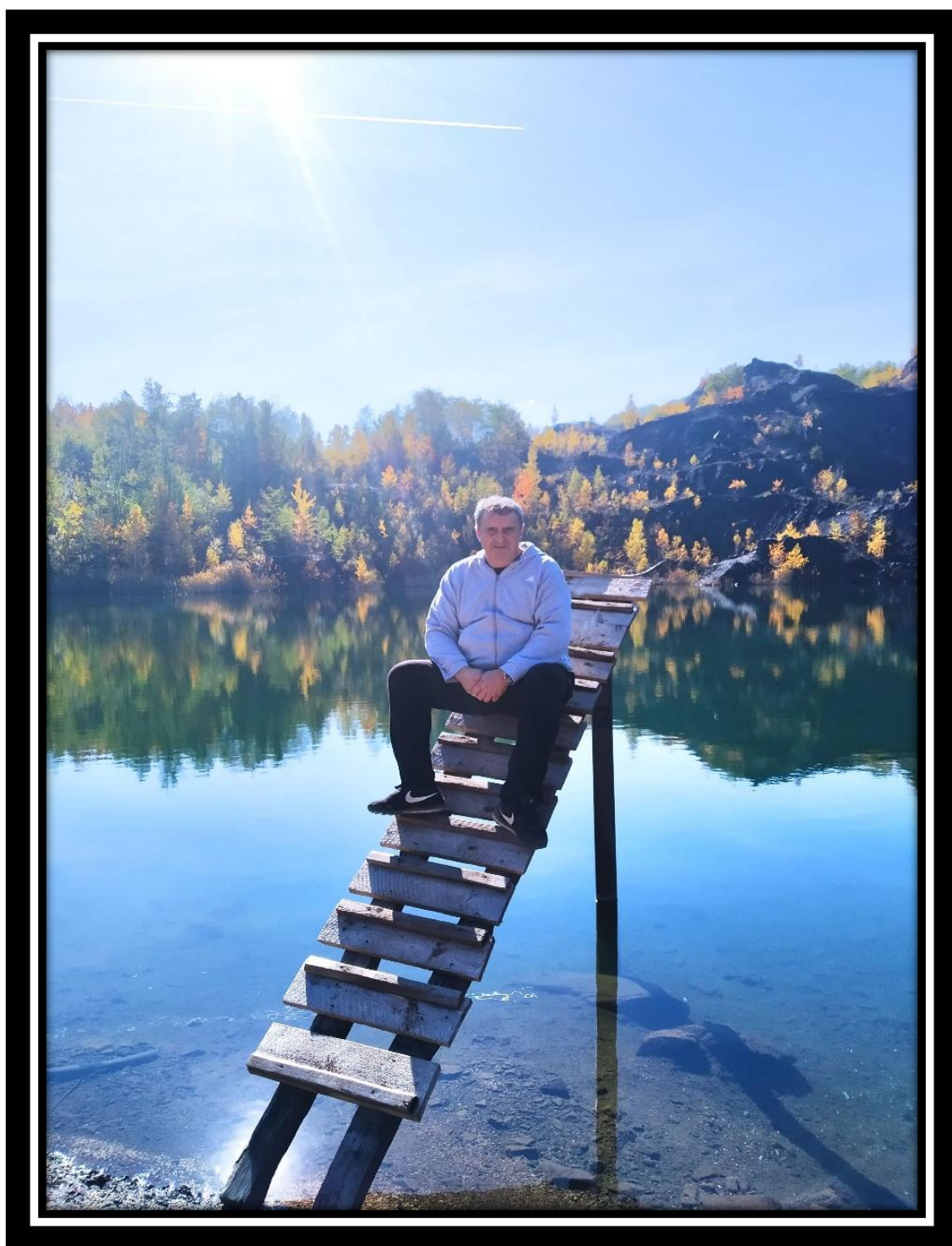


IN MEMORIAM:

PROFESSOR RADOSLAV DEKIĆ

(1976 – 2025)



It was on May 23, 2025, that we learned with deep sorrow of the passing of our esteemed friend and colleague, Prof. Radoslav Dekić, after a long and serious illness. Everyone who knew him received this sad news with disbelief, as it was hard to imagine that a man who had been conducting field research in Herzegovina just a few weeks earlier and planning new field tasks could be defeated by illness.

That day, we learned that we had lost forever a wonderful and noble person—a professor, mentor, role model, support, and pillar for all of us. He will be remembered as a distinguished professor, a prominent expert, and a dedicated educator, who left a strong and lasting mark on the academic community as well as on generations of students he advised and guided over the years.

His lectures and fieldwork were an inexhaustible source of inspiration for many, and the openness and humanity he possessed make us remember him today as a great role model and a sincere friend. For this reason, this *In memoriam* is dedicated to a man of great heart and extraordinary energy, whose work and personality will remain forever in our memories.



Figures 1 & 2. Fieldwork on the Bosanka (2021) and the Drina (2023) Rivers

Life and Education

Radoslav Dekić was born in Sanski Most on August 16, 1976. Tragically, he lost his father, the head of the family, at the age of seven. Supported by his closest relatives, he completed primary and secondary education in his hometown.

As a young man, he and his family found themselves in the whirlwind of war, forced to leave their homeland—the village of Bošnjake at the foot of the Grmeč Mountain—carrying with them deep roots and memories that never left him. These were years of premature adulthood, but Radoslav faced them with dignity and responsibility. Due to years of hardship and constant adaptation, he never had the luxury of youthful nonchalance; from an early age, he demonstrated maturity and perseverance that characterized him throughout his life.

In 1996, he enrolled at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, University of Banja Luka. He graduated in 2001, after which he began his professional career at the same faculty. He earned his Master’s degree in 2006 at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, University of Banja Luka, defending his thesis titled “Ecophysiological Characteristics of *Barbus peloponnesius* from the Suturlija and Jakotinska Rivers.”

He defended his doctoral dissertation titled “Circannual Studies of the Hematological Status of *Barbus peloponnesius* in Relation to Habitat” in 2010, earning the title of Doctor of Biological Sciences.

Scientific Contribution and Research

His primary areas of scientific interest and work were animal physiology, ecophysiology, ichthyology, and aquatic ecology. Prof. Dekić studied, advanced professionally, and taught at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, University of Banja Luka, within the Biology study program and the Ecology and Environmental Protection study program, as well as at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Banja Luka.

He was a member of numerous professional and scientific societies, including the Serbian Biological Society, the Serbian Water Protection Society, and the European Ichthyological Society. He authored a large number of scientific and professional papers, as well as several books. He participated in and coordinated numerous national and international projects.

Much of his professional career was spent in the field, alongside streams, rivers, and lakes of our country, carefully studying their ichthyofauna. Persistent and responsible, together with his closest collaborators, he explored regions largely unknown to most of us. Fieldwork was often physically demanding, but Radoslav knew how to motivate himself and others with his favorite songs. In the hardest moments, his quietly hummed verses brought smiles to everyone’s faces.

Fieldwork, although physically exhausting, was also the most enjoyable time spent with him, filled with laughter and positive energy. With his closest collaborators, he traveled across almost the entire Republic of Srpska, traversing rough roads and inaccessible paths, and sailing on numerous rivers and lakes.



Figures 3 & 4. Fish sampling on the Sana (2001) and Vrbas (2016) Rivers

He spoke with special enthusiasm about the unreal landscapes of Fatničko Polje, which he always revisited with joy and delight. His last fieldwork took place in Herzegovina, where he aimed to study mountain lakes. Despite being aware of the severity of his illness, he did not give up. He dreamed of exploring Zelengora and realizing his plans. Such strength to plan and

hope in the most difficult times belonged only to a person of inexhaustible energy, someone who truly loved his work.



Figure 5. On the slopes of Zelengora near Kotlaničko Lake (2016)

Contribution to the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics

Prof. Radoslav Dekić went through all academic ranks at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, University of Banja Luka, from assistant in 2001 to full professor in 2021. Following his promotion to senior assistant, recognizing his qualities, responsibility, and dedication, colleagues supported him in being elected Vice Dean for Teaching. He held this position from 2009 to 2023, and from October 2023, he served as Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, University of Banja Luka.



Figure 6. With closest collaborators and students during the “Student Days of the University of Banja Luka” event (2024)

He will be remembered for his knowledge, humanity, and selfless dedication to the Faculty. Generations of students and colleagues testify to him as an outstanding expert, a beloved professor, a devoted mentor, and a professional collaborator. Gentle, quiet, and

unobtrusive, he always knew how to listen and help, finding solutions even in the most difficult situations. The doors of his office, and later the dean's office, were always open to all. He cultivated sincere and fair relationships with students, collaborators, technical staff, and colleagues, leaving the impression of the best host the Faculty could have.



Figure 7. Field teaching with students on the Čehotina River (2023)

Private Life and Family

Although significant, his academic and scientific achievements were smaller in value than what he considered most important in his family. With his wife Dragana, he managed, despite numerous life challenges, to build a home filled with warmth, peace, and love. His sons Mihajlo and Aleksandar were his pride and strength. He always spoke about them with special affection, placing them above all professional accomplishments. Wherever he was, he carried them in his heart.

Through his life, actions filled with kindness, and sincere intentions toward others, he left an honorable name, beautiful memories, and lasting friendships.

These lines are a final farewell to our dear colleague Radoslav—known among friends as Rade, Rašo, Deko, Raško, or prof. His passing represents an irreplaceable loss for the academic community, students, and all who had the honor to know him. He will remain in our memory as a distinguished professor, a wonderful colleague, and a sincere friend—a man of gentleness, principles, and great integrity.

In his final years, he demonstrated what a fighter he was, leading his most difficult battle bravely, quietly, and with faith and hope. His quiet yet powerful presence left a deep and indelible mark on all of us.

Dear Radoslav, you remain in our memories, and we remain confident that you are in a better and more peaceful place. At every step, the traces of your cheerful spirit, smile, hummed songs, and selfless advice remain. Silence follows you, but also gratitude.

Rest in peace, dear Professor—and may it be bright for you up there.

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