

PORTRAITS – Personalities of Romanian science and culture

Two shining examples of excellence in both science and sport

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Abstract

Many outstanding personalities in Romanian sports were also well known scientists. Two of them are featured here, Nicolae Ghilezan, member of the Romanian Academy, and Uray Zoltan, member of the Hungarian Academy, both of them renowned specialists in oncology and biology, respectively. Both were high performance fencers, with participations in national and international competitions.

Keywords: academics, oncology, biology, fencing, sports performance.

NICOLAE GHILEZAN



Doctor of Cluj. He was born on July 1, 1938, in Cluj-Napoca. He graduated from “Emil Racoviță” High School in Cluj-Napoca (1950-1954). He studied at the Faculty of General Medicine at the University of

Medicine and Pharmacy in Cluj-Napoca (1954-1960). He pursued postgraduate studies in radiology (1964-1966) and oncology (1965) at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Bucharest. In 1967, he attended courses in oncologic radiotherapy at the “G. Roussy” Institute in Paris. Specializing in oncology and radiotherapy, he followed the academic path from assistant professor to doctoral supervisor, visiting professor in the United States, emeritus professor at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Cluj-Napoca, and became a full member of the Romanian Academy in 2016. His prodigious scientific activity is reflected in over 148 studies and articles published in the country, and over 64 articles published internationally. He authored three monographs in the country (as the sole author), co-authored 36 works in the country, and co-authored three works internationally. He has been recognized and awarded by the Romanian Academy.

Academician Nicolae Ghilezan is well-known among Romanian athletes. He passionately and wholeheartedly practiced fencing. He excelled in sabre, earning numerous titles in national and regional competitions as a member of the “Știința” Cluj University Sports Club. Let us mention just a few of his most notable individual achievements. In 1952, he won first place in men’s sabre; in 1953, he took third place in men’s foil; in 1954 and 1955, he secured second place in men’s sabre; in 1956, he won first place in men’s sabre; and in 1958, he claimed first place in men’s sabre (all in the national junior championships). As a

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senior in this noble sport, he is one of the founders of the Association of Fencing Friends in Cluj (APSC). He has always found time to meet with young and senior fencers in Cluj, being one of the honorary guests at memorial tournaments. He is an exemplary figure of excellence both in science and sport.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the father of today's academic, Professor Dr. Nicolae Ghilezan, Ioan Ghilezan, held the position of center half for the U Cluj football team from 1926 to 1934, for a period of eight years.

URAY ZOLTAN



A biologist from Cluj, born on September 23, 1931, attended secondary school at the Reformed College in Cluj (1942-1950), graduated from the Faculty of Biology at Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj (1950-1955), obtained a Ph.D. in Biology (1970) from Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj, pursued postgraduate studies at the Institute of Atomic Physics in Bucharest (1960), the Institute of Radiobiology in Budapest (1964, 1966, 1970), and

the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm (1971-1972). Specialized in experimental radiobiology and nuclear medicine, worked as a biologist at the Nuclear Medicine Laboratory in Cluj, senior researcher at the "Constantin Chiricuța" Oncology Institute in Cluj, invited researcher at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm (1974), University of Freiburg (1979), Oncology Institute in Budapest (1990-1991), University of Szeged Medical School (1992-1993), full member of the Hungarian Academy (1998), with a distinguished scientific career reflected in over 150 specialized articles both in Romania and abroad, co-author of 5 monographs, co-author and editor of 6 Oncology Encyclopedias, author of studies and essays on fencing, awarded by the Hungarian Academy.

In terms of sports, in 1947, he made his debut at the National Junior Championships, securing the second place in foil. In 1948, he became the national champion in foil and took the third place in sabre at the National Senior Championships. In 1948, he achieved the second place in foil and in 1952, he attained the second place in both foil and sabre at the National Senior Championships. He represented the Romanian team in men's foil and individual men's sabre at the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki. Additionally, at the World University Championships in Budapest in 1954, he won the bronze medal in individual foil and in team sabre. He was awarded the title of Master of Sport in 1954, received the Order of Labor medal in the same year, and was honored with the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit of Hungary in 1992.

Between 1954 and 1956, he had the opportunity to compete against five world and Olympic champions. In chronological order, his opponents were Gyuricza József, Fülöp Mihály, Christian d'Oriola, Allan Jay, and Eduardo Mangiarotti, all legendary figures in the world of fencing. In 1956, in Budapest, he reached the final eight out of 39 participants, which included four world champions. This achievement catapulted him to international recognition.

As a coach, he mentored a generation of cadets who achieved remarkable results both nationally and internationally. He is also one of the founders of the Association of Fencing Friends in Cluj (APSC). In his old age, he remains extremely active in journalism and in organizing fencing memorial competitions in Cluj. He stands as a shining example of excellence in both science and sport.