Professor Branimir Marković

Professor Branimir Marković (1917–1973) was a distinguished physicist, educator, and a pioneer of science and teaching in Croatia. He spent the last nine years of his life in Rijeka, where he founded the first four-year study program in Mathematics and Physics and twice served as Dean of the Higher School of Industrial Pedagogy. For his lifelong contributions, he was posthumously awarded the City of Rijeka Lifetime Achievement Award in 1974.

Born in Ravna Gora, where his family had a long tradition in education, Marković studied mathematics and physics at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb, where he earned his doctorate at the age of 27. Together with Ivan Supek and colleagues, he co-founded the Ruđer Bošković Institute in the 1950s, where he led the Laboratory for Atomic Research until his death. He was a pioneer in the theory of optical pumping—work that later earned Alfred Kastler the Nobel Prize in Physics (1968). In 1967, he and his collaborators built the first gas laser in Croatia, earning him the Nikola Tesla Award.

Professor Marković was also a passionate educator and popularizer of science. He served for 16 years as editor of the *Mathematics and Physics Journal*, organized the national event *Days of Physics – Dr. Branimir Marković*, and received recognition as a teacher of exceptional influence. His professional and academic engagements included memberships in national and international scientific bodies, editorial boards, and educational councils, where he played a key role in advancing physics education.

Remembered as both a brilliant scientist and an inspiring teacher, Marković left a legacy of lasting value. His name is carried by an elementary school in Ravna Gora, as well as streets in Rijeka and Ravna Gora. More than three decades after his passing, he remains a role model for scientists, teachers, and students alike. He died prematurely in 1973, at the age of 56, and was laid to rest in his hometown.