



UNIVERSITY of the THIRD AGE

serbia & montenegro

University of the Third Age People's University
"Braća Stamenković"

Adult Education Society

Belgrade
2004.

UNIVERSITY
of the THIRD
AGE

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The main reason for the publishing of this booklet is to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the "University of the Third Age". Presentation of the results achieved thus far; emphasis of certain specificities of this "University of the Third Age" in comparison to other such institutions; noting of the circumstances which influenced the directions of its development; illustration of the programs and activities which enjoy the greatest interest among elderly students; experiences of some of the participants in the program, as well as outlining of the plans for the development of the "University of the Third Age" – is only part of the information provided in this booklet.

As is usually the case, behind every reason there is a myriad of motives why something is done, and in this respect this booklet is no exception. Beside the desire to symbolically mark a beautiful and important anniversary, we also tried to emphasize the need for a qualitatively different approach to aging and to old age. In outlining the results we achieved, we wanted to show that with sufficient enthusiasm and professional effort, quite a lot can be achieved in areas that are completely ignored by society, as is the case with education of the elderly. The

presentation of the programs offered at the University is not only intended to affirm its wealth and diversity, but, above all, to bring attention to the diversity of needs and interests of the elderly. The experiences of people who enrolled in some of the programs should motivate, inspire and encourage everyone who is hesitant, who is insecure and has doubts in their own abilities.

The cohesive team at the "University of the Third Age" is one of the most valuable results of the fifteen years that this Project has been up and running. It attracts people from various professions, with different work and life experiences, and includes experts, trainees, professionals, volunteers, etc. This publication would never have come to life had a large number of associates not gotten involved, not just in activities related to its preparation, but also in activities that preceded it and which refer to the establishment of the University, its prosperity, publicizing of its activities and the creation of the conditions for its development. This is a wonderful occasion to express our gratitude once again to all our associates for the various types of assistance and support that they have provided, with the hope that this will continue in the future and that we will celebrate together all future anniversaries.

Svetlana Živanić

ТРЕЋЕ ДОБА

Универзитет за треће доба

Лепо је да и
пензионери
имају свој
универзитет



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Отворен Универзитет за треће животно доба

Први у Србији, други у Југославији, Универзитет за образовање у трећем животној добу, отворен је јуче у Народном универзитету "Браћа Стаменковић".

Универзитет је оформљен на иницијативу Института за педагогију и андрагогију Филозофског факултета, који је теоријски обликовао и стручно осмислио концепцију и програмску основу рада НУ "Браћа Стаменковић" и Образовног програма ТВ Београд. Пројекат је прихватио Европски савет за образовање одраслих као део међународног пројекта. (Танјуг)

БРИГА О
СТАРИМА

Универзитет за треће доба
подучава временске полазнике
*Нећу неписмен
на онај свет*

УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ
ЗА ТРЕЋЕ ДОБА
ОРГАНИЗУЈЕ
ПРОГРАМЕ ЗА
ПЕНСИОНЕРЕ

ПЕНЗИЈА НИЈЕ БОЛЕСТ



УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ ЗА ТРЕЋЕ ДОБА

На Новосадском
Отвореном универзитету
**ШКОЛА ЗА
ТРЕЋЕ ДОБА**

- победите страх од рачунара
- испольте своје таленте
- побољшајте своју кондицију
- научите страни језик
- склопите нова познанства...



"Star si kada ne želiš ništa da naučiš"

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СЕДОКОСИ КОМПЈУТЕРАШИ

ПЕНЗИОНЕРИ КРСТАРЕ ИНТЕРНЕТОМ

Кроз прву учионицу за интернет Универзитета за треће доба у НУ Браћа Стаменковић, намењену само пензионерима, до сада прошло 160 најстаријих суграђана, док је на листи чекања још 120 заинтересованих - Четири рачунара недовољно за све заинтересоване. - Електронска пошта и виртуелна галерија

УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ ЗА ТРЕЋЕ ДОБА

Место за "трећу младост"
 Ова установа постоји пет година, а идеја је осмишљавање слободног времена пензионера као и поправљање квалитета живота кроз учешће у образовним и културним активностима.

PENZIONERI STUDENTI

PRKOSE
VREMENU
pensioneri
u ateljeu

ПЕНЗИОНЕРСКИ САЈТ

Мало је познато да наши најстарији суграђани имају и свој сајт (www.seniornetinfo.org.yu), на којем могу да се информишу о свим питањима која су везана за пензионо и инвалидско осигурање. Ту су и странице посвећене здрављу, култури, образовању и туризму, као и информације о курсевима на Универзитету за треће доба. Пензионери могу да објаве и свој мали оглас на овом сајту или једноставно да "четују" попут својих унука.

Уместо самоће и прича о бремену година, изабрали су нове радости. Уче сликање, рад на компјутеру, стране језике и вештине за које у младости нису имали времена.



CHALLENGES OF THE THIRD AGE

We are the first people in history who justifiably expect to grow old. Until 1890, the lifespan of our ancestors did not differ much from what was recorded in history up to that time – at birth we could be expected to reach our late thirties or early forties. Today there is a very high probability that the majority of the population in the developed world will live to their mid or late seventies. If you are a Japanese woman, you can realistically expect to live up to 82 years of age. We have doubled the length of time we spend in this world.

This represents the profoundest



change in the duration of human life which occurred in the 20th century. Our longevity appeared so suddenly that, in a way, it erased our memories of our ancestors. Just a little over 70 years passed since the flu epidemic took the lives of more residents of Europe than World War II; in the Victorian Age people were exposed to mortal diseases on a scale that is hardly imaginable today; infant mortality only began dropping off appreciably during the 20's and 30's of the 20th century. Only the oldest among us were born at a time when human life ended in catastrophes that have been nearly completely eliminated today.

The shock wave of this historical change is only recently beginning to be observed. We accept the fact that we can expect old age to last 10, 20 or even 30 years, but very few people realize what old age could include. Besides this, our culture is perpetuating the mistakes of the past – we retire at 60 or 65, and then we are treated as old, unproductive and “problematic”. Also, we are expected to be sick and batty, i.e. demented.

Our culture must learn to adapt to the fact that it has a far older population than any other culture in history. This is not just the result of the prolongation of the lifespan, but



also of the constant reduction in the birth rate, the consequence of which is a steadily increasing proportion of the elderly in the overall population. The “baby boom” associated with the 50’s and the 60’s of the last century can be realistically expected to be replaced by the “wrinkly furrowed boom”, beginning with year 2015 and on. It is estimated that by 2025 one fifth of the world’s population will consist of people above the age of 65, while in 1951, that portion constituted only one tenth. Still, we must not forget that in the undeveloped world the lifespan of the majority remains at the level which we abandoned at the end of the 19th century. One of the consequences of this is that every third world tourist is struck by the unusually old age of the population in the West.

In Britain, debates on the elderly are often conducted at discouragingly low levels. The brunt of the discussion concentrates on social conditions – how much is spent on pensions and how we “take care” of the elderly. We are so caught up in neutralizing and patronizing the elderly, with a one-sided stipulation of social work, that it never occurs to us that longevity should be a cause for celebration.

The causes for this situation can be partly found in our surprising ability

to experience old age always as something that happens only to other people. Elizabeth Mills who heads research on the aging process, points to the fact that to a five-year-old, an 18-year-old appears old, and that we retain this experience of age difference from childhood to old age. People who are 90 years old rarely view themselves as old – they reserve such labels for the 95-year-olds.

Something should be said about the unacceptable attitude in medicine that the proximity and increased certainty of death among older people is silently accepted as complete disqualification of humanness. Many doctors admit today that during history, the medical science tended to





treat illnesses among the elderly as inevitable and incurable, and even as insufficiently significant in terms of attempts at treatment. "People completely misunderstand my field of work," Prof. Ken Woodhouse states, at 36 the youngest professor of geriatric medicine in Britain. "The majority of my patients have undergone successful treatment and can return to normal life."

In fact, there is no single illness that is unique to the elderly. Baby-boomers will know more about this and will demand more from their doctors, while today's older generations are prone to calmly accepting the uncertain wisdom of the profession.

The ideal that doctors like Prof. Woodhouse are working on is not the mere prolongation of human life. There are different conceptions on how the ideal human life should look. Some writers claim that genetically, depending on living environment and personal habits, the ideal human can live to age 130. However, a far greater number of people believe that 85 years represent the best that can be expected. The real focus of modern geriatric medicine is the reduction of the dying process in such a way that good health is maintained up to the last day of life. Prof. Woodhouse's ideal is that of a man who one day

plays golf, and the next is no longer with us.

Such an ideal increases our need for studying old age in greater detail. If the ideal is to be reasonably healthy, then the vivid presentation about dear, helpless older persons who always drag their feet with the aid of Zimmer frames, needs to be abandoned in favor of our more positive view. The *Third Age* movement represents the most systematic attempt at changing this picture. Initially inspired by Peter Laslett, the 74-year-old member of the teaching staff at Trinity College in Cambridge, it is based on the view that life is divided into four ages: childhood and youth; work





and family; freedom from work and family, and finally decrepitude and death.

The first, second and fourth ages are fairly precisely defined within existing social structures. The so-called third age represents a new element which can be justifiably expected only in developed, wealthy societies. For Prof. Laslett, it represents "life's crown", for it provides a large number of people with the freedom and the possibility of self-fulfillment, and the whole human effort throughout history has been, unquestionably, devoted to this.

Lord Young of Darington has recently abandoned the Third Age ideolo-

gy and has become even more radical. In a speech for the British Association he demanded a society in which all information about the date of birth would be banned. Work would be divided more evenly throughout life and it would be unlawful to remove someone from work because of age. This would remove the problem of the increasing number of the dependent population – pensioners, for society would accept them as active individuals, i.e. as people like all others.

Starting from such a premise, the very admission of the existence of the Fourth Age as the final downfall, could be construed as subjection to the danger that people would be sent all too early into the "final embrace". Prof. Laslett responds to such radical views with the observation that we must be realistic and accept the inevitability of a dropping off in abilities. Regardless of how many supporters of the Third Age movement there are, it is an undeniable fact that the majority of people when they turn 80 and older, if not already in their 70's, are characterized by a reduction in abilities and an increase in the level of dependence.

Intelligence test results can point to false conclusions, for if you are 70 years old, you are automatically granted a bonus. The reality is that



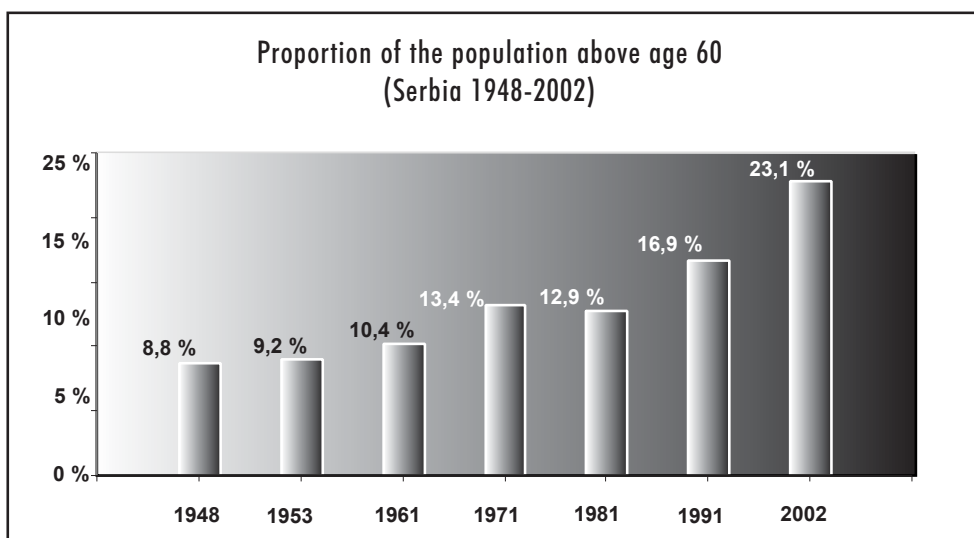


our abilities sometimes drop off drastically. When asked what an individual who in their twenties had an IQ of 150 could expect at age 70, Prof. Patrick Rabbitt from Manchester University responded: "If he does not drink, smoke, eats moderately and exercises, although not exceedingly, he can expect to lose 5 or 6 points."

Besides the usual rules for maintaining good health, prof. Rabbitt advises the practicing of certain skills that contribute to the maintaining of abilities in old age. Using himself as an example he demonstrates that mental ability can be maintained through regular practicing of chess, crossword puzzles or something along those lines.

However, one should not be overly ambitious. Mathematics as a diversion during the waning years, in his opinion, would present too great a challenge.

This writer believes that in the psychological sense we should change some set behavioral patterns. Namely, we should learn to accept the existence of a career climax, following which, until retirement, there is stagnation and waning. This would replace the current ambitious position that we must always strive ahead and upwards, in order to negate the waning and the final end. He also points to one interesting fact – that politicians are no longer as old as they used to be.





In the time of Adenauer and Churchill, old age was an acceptable attribute. However, Regan's image suffered because of the fact that he was 77 years old. In our time, elected leaders are mostly between the ages of 40 and 50.

Two things are clear: first, Laslett is right in his efforts on drawing our attention to the importance of activity in our old age, and, second, no medical advances will change the fact that our destiny preordains us to gradual loss of abilities at that very age.

In whatever way we choose to understand the mentioned changes, it is a fact that the prolongation of the lifespan and the certainty of old age for the majority represents a revolutionary change which is not sufficiently accepted. It requires changes in nearly all aspects of life – from education to the economy. And it requires the biggest change from ourselves.

*»The Sunday Times«, 1990
presented by
Svetlana Živanić*

Editor's Note: The Sunday Times article was received many years ago from a student. It was translated into Serbian, without any title or information about the author. As we were very inspired by it, and given that even after fifteen years it has not lost any of its relevance, we entitled it "Challenges of the Third Age" and decided to publish it in this publication, hoping that the author will not take it against us.

FROM IDEA TO REALIZATION

Year 2004 marked the fifteenth anniversary of the establishment of the "University of the Third Age". What can be said about its genesis?

As director of General Educational Programming at TV Belgrade, for many years I dealt with various types of adult education, and therefore with the education of the elderly through television screens. The knowledge that in the former Yugoslavia, in Ljubljana, a "University of the Third Age" already existed, merely strengthened my conviction in using the television program »Nešto više« (tr. "Something More"), which I directed and anchored, to finally start a campaign for opening such an institution here in Belgrade. The idea was realized, so that the cameras were witness to a series of profes-





sionals, artists, pensioners, the old and the young, who voiced their opinions on the idea of establishing such an institution in the Yugoslav capital. And there were various opinions: ranging from skepticism, where the “University of the Third Age” could become “a ghetto for the elderly”, to convictions that it could provide the elderly with “a new identity”, countering existing stereotypes.

My enthusiasm merely increased for this project which I considered to

be from the very beginning a precondition for a civilizational step forward, especially after visiting similar institutions in Ljubljana and Paris. On both occasions my best associate was the TV camera which recorded authentically things toward which no one could remain indifferent: the elderly engaging in various types of activities, people who after going into retirement decided to adopt learning as a lifestyle.

My perseverance, the power of television as a medium, and the willing-





ness of the public to support my idea, finally bore fruit. The Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade, which I contacted, quickly offered a program for the future University, while the »Braća Stamenković« People's University provided its facilities for the purpose. Thus the Faculty of Philosophy, »Braća Stamenković« and TV Belgrade became the founders of today's "University of the Third Age" in Belgrade.

In that distant 1989, with this educational institution, we practically stepped into Europe and the World, where at that time (particularly in France) there was a very positive attitude toward this University joining the International Association of Universities of the Third Age. Unfortunately, this process was halted by the well known tragic events in our country.

Today this unique institution in our country requires greater attention and help from society in order for the noble idea of institutionalized education for the elderly to be realized in other larger cities in Serbia.

Slobodanka Piskulidi-Čolanović

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE- A STORY ABOUT TWO CONTINENTS

When I gained my first professional job as a BA in Adult Education, young, full of knowledge and enthusiasm, I could not anticipate that the idea of education in the third age would be so "contagious", to the point that I would have no desire to prove myself in any other area of adult education. Looking back, it is perfectly clear why that is so.

The Project "University of the Third Age" had an ambitious beginning, as all big, new ideas have. I can recall those days and our self-confidence, although the circumstances of society did not help us much at that time. However, fifteen years of work are testament to the success of the idea and make all our extraordinary efforts worth while. We particularly become aware of how long a period 15 years represents when we look at our photographs from that period, which inevitably bring a smile. And particularly when we consider all the changes that have since taken place in our lives.

As older and wiser men say, time strikes out all difficulties, challenges, obstacles, misunderstandings. What remains are the nice moments and recognition from the people for whom the University of the Third Age was intended. That is worth



more that all public tributes or recognition put together. How many participants went thought the different programs of the University, I do not know anymore. However, one thing I do know, I can clearly remember many faces. I was always fascinated by the joy of achievement and the desire for new information. Our members are the best proof of what we knew from theory – that learning is a lifelong process. It is never too late to start embracing new knowledge. New skills open new doors. One need generates another. I think that I always felt best at the exhibitions presented by our members. I was witness to the process

of creation, as well as all the creative phases (and crises) that every creative process inevitably goes through. Our exhibitions told much more about our University than we were aware. The crisis in Yugoslav society swung open the doors of the West for many of our young people. At the same time, it brought their parents to our University. English language became a very popular program during the mid-nineties. I think that Svetlana and I saw off more than 100 seniors to Canada, USA, and Australia. Maybe even more. The game of life sometimes makes very interesting stories... I am in contact with some of them, although





we are so far away from each other. All of them have only nice words for the University of the Third Age. Participation in the different programs meant very much to them. I clearly remember the enormous effort we put into our University getting its computer classroom. For Belgrade's retired people, Internet became a communication tool right when they needed it the most. The story about computer literacy was completed when we created our web page, which represents our University and certainly is a bridge between Belgrade and the rest of the world... I have to mention all the wonderful

people who generously gave their time, knowledge, professionalism and patience to all of us... our instructors. Many of them have not had previous experience working with the third age generation, but they were "infected" by the challenge and the beauty that education in this life stage brings with it. I know that many of them are still active mentors at the University's programs. I remember many friends of the University, our professors, representatives of the media and different institutions, our colleagues. They followed up and supported our work over the past 15 years.





A stroke of luck brought me to the North-American continent, to Toronto. I accepted the new challenges with joy and quite comfortably sailed into the education of the third age generation. My professional identity, which had developed here in Belgrade, was further extended and enriched. If you ask me what is different here, I would say "many things". Education in the third age here is a rule and a need at the same time. Therefore, many institutions are intended for the education of seniors. One of the differences is, of course, the language of communication. Many clubs and centers for seniors are organized at the community level with the idea of bringing education closer to the

people. There are also clubs for seniors of different ethnic descent. My experience in one of the clubs, in a way represented the continuation of my Belgrade experience. Club E.P.Taylor Place offers senior educational programs that are almost identical to those of the University of the Third Age. I had the pleasure of presenting a VCR tape about the tenth anniversary of the University of the Third Age to Canadian seniors. They were very surprised and delighted by the similarities between the two institutions. In addition, I have to admit that I was very proud. Therefore, the concept is the same, the content is very similar, motives for participating in the programs are identical...in one word, the needs of the third age generation are the same, no matter whether they live in Belgrade or Toronto.



Every new anniversary of the University of the Third Age is proof that this concept is more than necessary for the third age generation. Perhaps we can expect further difficulties and obstacles in the future, but we should never again doubt that the University of the Third Age will keep in step with the world.

*Irina Semjonov
B.A in Adult Education
Toronto, Canada*



ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

In November of 2004 the University of the Third Age celebrated its fifteenth anniversary.

A celebration was organized at the "Braća Stamenković" People's University where all the students, associates and friends of the University of the Third Age gathered. A retrospective exhibition of works by students of the painting program was organized, accompanied by a pleasant program. The exhibition was opened by Mr. Pavle Mihailović, former director of the "Braća Stamenković" People's University, who had the good sense to open the doors of his institution to a program that was unusual for its time. Also, from the very beginning he was convinced that the painting program will be the main feature of this University, and he was certainly right in this. With well chosen words and without hiding his pleasure at the fact that his intuition was correct, he wished everyone many more years of success. What was particularly wonderful at this celebration was that the evening was accompanied by a superb, almost intimate atmosphere, where everyone shared the sense of having taken part in something that is very valuable and useful.

Also, prof. Ph.D. Dušan Savićević's latest book *Učenje i starenje* (tr.*Learning and Aging*) had its promotion on the occasion of the anniversary celebration, followed by a round table discussion "Education of the Elderly – experiences and perspectives".

At the proposal of the Gerontology Society of Serbia, on October 1, 2004, the International Day of the Elderly, the University of the Third Age received a diploma for its special contribution to the development of gerontological thought and practice, thereby getting in its anniversary year valuable recognition for its work.

The significance of everything that was achieved in the past fifteen years was best expressed by the students themselves who did not conceal their joy and excitement, proudly announcing that the twentieth anniversary will be marked by an even bigger celebration.



МАЧ ВОР КРАТЕН ВОРК

Изложба радова
Уметничке радионице
Универзитета за треће доба
НУ "Браћа Стаменковић"



Етнографски музеј у Београду
Манакова кућа
Гаврила Принципа 5
3 - 13. септембар 2004.

ОБРАЗОВАЊЕ

КУСТВА КУСТВА перспективе

Београд, 18. децембар 2004.

ДП "ЂУРО САЛАЈ"
БЕОГРАД, НЕМАЊИНА 28

Прим. др Бранка Максимовић **ХОДОЧАШЋА** **БОЈОМ** ИЗЛОЖБА САНЈА

19. XI - 03. XII 2003.

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UNIVERSITY
FOR THE
THIRD AGE

UNIVERZITET ZA TREĆE DOBA

UNIVERSITÄT FÜR DAS DRITTE LEBENSALTER

UNIVERSITÉ DU TROISIÈME ÂGE

Serbia and Montenegro

Галерија
НУ БРАЋА СТАМЕНКОВИЋ
Београд, Митрополита Петра 8

О
Д
Н
НА 15

Univerzitet za treće doba
Društvo za obrazovanje

Vas pozivaju na

Novogodišnji program

od 27.12. do 29.12.2004. godine

Pozivamo Vas da se u predprazničnim danima družite, zabavite i na vreme kupite lep i originalan poklon za one koje volite

VELIMO VAS

ВЕЛИКА
РЕТРОСПЕКТИВНА
ИЗЛОЖБА

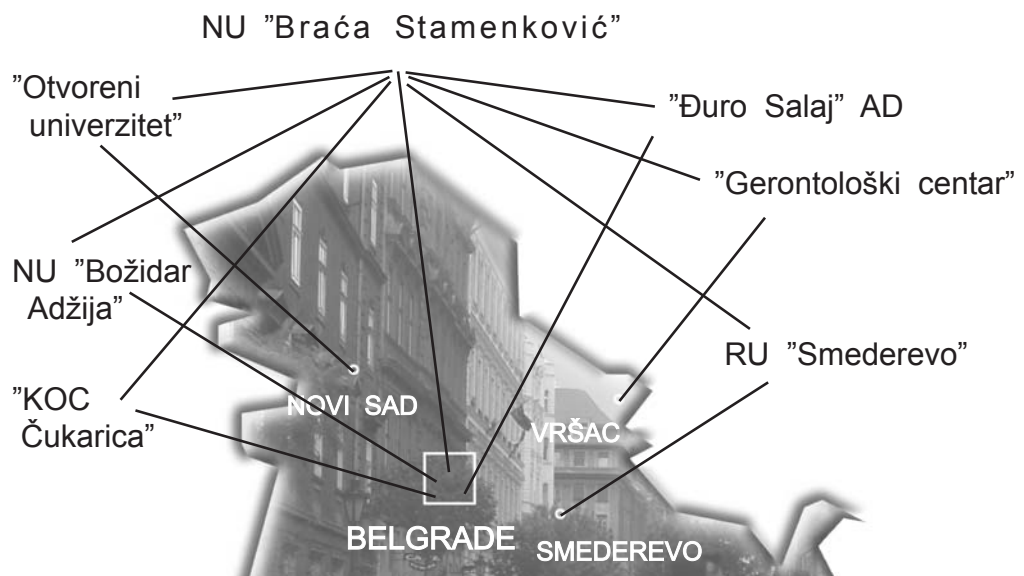
Београд, 2004. године

Промоција књиге
"Учење и"

prod



NETWORK OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE





UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE-AGENT OF CHANGE IN THE EDUCATION OF THE ELDERLY

The anniversary of an institution is a good opportunity for professional and other stakeholders to make a critical-prognostic review of that institution's work or to consider a particular phenomenon in wider social context and to find strengths and resources that would support further development and progress.

The celebration of the 15th anniversary of the University of the Third Age in Belgrade provided an opportunity for such considerations.

How can we explain the paradox that, on the one hand, work at the

University of the Third Age was progressing and developing while, on the other hand, the social context within which all this was happening was disintegrating? While education of the elderly depends on the social relation towards the elderly, on the one hand, and on the position of adult education in the system of education, on the other, unfavorable trends on both fronts over the past fifteen years did not provide perspective for significant expansion of the idea of education of the elderly.

Changes of regimes and different democratic parties, first of all, indicated different understandings of problems of the elderly in society and of their education, while the problem remained in the same place and in the same form.





There was no readiness and resources for solving it. Research on readiness just made the well known data official: the elderly are a group with a special poverty risk and they constitute $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total number of poor people.

The idea of lifelong learning is only partially appearing in educational policy, although its understanding remains on the surface. Reform is directed towards schools, more precisely towards the formal system of education of children, for whom lifelong learning is planned; but neither is the system of formal education

designed as an open system of initial education with further perspectives, nor is adult education recognized as social empowerment that is rooted in the idea of lifelong learning. Not to speak of education of the elderly. It is not even officially mentioned.

The real question is: how did the University of the Third Age successfully manage to develop its work, programs, and network and managed to increase its enrollment?

There are several reasons for this:





Since its establishment, the University of the Third Age is a unique, exclusive and a vanguard institution. Unfortunately, it kept this status until today, although the idea for the University of the Third Age in Belgrade to be a model that will serve to popularize this idea across Serbia.

The main reason for its existence and development lies in the persistence and self-organization of its participants. Amid general poverty, participants financed the work of the University and built up the institution to meet their needs. They promoted the values of the University through their earnest participation in social life and activities.

The third reason behind its development and progress is the highly professional and trained staff that manages the institution and programs its activities. Fostering of the tuition work and tutors and sensitivity to the specific aspects of education of people in third age are good guarantees for the institution's stability and progress.

The fourth reason is the ongoing care of the founders of University for its further development. Radio Television of Serbia (RTS), the "Braća Stamenković" People's University and the Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy, are working hard on fostering the work of the

University of the Third Age. Training of teaching staff for work at the University and the Project 'Development of the University of the Third Age Network in Serbia' are the latest contributions of the Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy in this field.

Fifth, with the help of foreign donors (IIZ/DVV, Bonn) the 'exclusive' idea of education of elderly has expanded to new cities. In this way, the University of the Third Age Network has been expanded to six new organizational units. This is the beginning of the transformation of the uniqueness and exclusivity of Belgrade's University of the Third Age toward the establishment of a wider institutional framework of education of the elderly in Serbia. In this way, one of the first tasks that was set at the time of its establishment began to be realized. Unfavorable social conditions were the reason why we had to wait fifteen years for its realization.

Taking all this into account, this anniversary of University of the Third Age could be the beginning of the turnaround in the further development of the University of the Third Age and the realization of its mission of defining a wider framework for education of the elderly in Serbia. Hence, development of the University of the Third Age includes



strong integration and partnerships with the governmental and non-governmental sectors in which different forms of education of the elderly are realized. Who are the elderly? What other forms of education of the elderly exist outside the University of the Third Age?

To be an elderly person in Serbia and Montenegro can mean many things, depending on whether the elderly person grew old in a city and stayed there to live, grew old in a village in which they were born or whether the vortex of war brought them to live out their old days in a foreign country and in someone else's home or in a collective refugee center.

The common problems of the 1,600,000 elderly people are: very difficult economic situation and the burden of the transition in which they pay a very high price, pessimism and discouragement about the future, poverty, neglect of their needs because of many other priorities, loneliness and social isolation, absence of official representatives who should represent their interests in government, absence of political and public support for satisfying their needs, lack of information about their rights and ways of protecting them. In addition, each of the abovementioned subgroups has their own particular, additional, specific problems.

Elderly people make up 16% of the population, increased by 2% of refugees, and it is expected that in year 2021 they will constitute 21% of the population. Above 50% of the elderly live in poor suburbs with their children, while one fifth are single.

Among refugees, elderly people are the most sensitive and vulnerable group. One third of the 100,000 refugees who still live in refugee camps and collective centers are elderly people. 200 suicides annually among these elderly people illustrate their life situation.

In Serbia, there are around 8000 places in old age homes, around 2000 elderly persons exercise their right to help in their homes, while 3000 use day care.

Activities and measures undertaken in the field of education of elderly people are divided in two basic ways:

a) Programs that are realized within the government sector - primarily in the institutions for adult education, health and the social care sector: Within the government's programs, the most important educational activities are realized in the form of social care, which is the most important aspect of work. Programs of education for the elderly are applied in institutional care and in



the network of open care, especially in clubs and day centers. They are mostly oriented toward health programs and psychosocial support. The main institutions of the educational system in which the elderly can satisfy their educational needs have totally failed them. The total separation of the school system from the adult educational system, which in the past decade has been guided by the quasi-principles of education and the quasi-principle of the labor force, has entirely destroyed this system, with the result that there were no real initiatives for the education of the elderly, given the unprofitable nature of such programs.

b) Programs organized by non-governmental organizations - primarily with socio-humanitarian orientation:

Significant support for satisfying the educational needs of elderly people during the past few years was bridged over by the establishment and the operation of the non-governmental sector which is flexible, sensitive and acts fast in supporting the needs of the most sensitive groups. 110 associations for socio-humanitarian programs are registered in the non-profit sector (40 in Belgrade, 28 in Vojvodina and 32 in other parts of Serbia). Among them 22 are established exclusively for working with elderly





people and almost all of them organize educational work for elderly people.

But the elderly are using the educational services of the associations, which also working with other segments of the population - particularly programs for refugees, women, family and human rights.

One example of good practice is the Citizens' Association 'Open for Neighbors' which was established in 1997 as part of the project 'Gerontology and Geriatrics' - program for support and care of elderly people in South-Eastern European countries. 17 countries participated and the Institute for an Open Society supported it.

Belgrade's program was directed towards the testing of models of alternative support and care of elderly people in local communities, support and promotion of social participation of elderly people and activating of local community resources in achieving integral care of elderly people. Many developed models of educational programs for elderly people, local community resources, professionals and volunteers, provided the basis for starting new initiatives.

In general, in the non-governmental organizations, 70% of elderly people who attend education programs are

women, more than 50% of them live alone and 40% are highly educated. Research conducted on the population of pensioners in Belgrade showed that their interests are directed towards:

- Preservation of physical and mental health* - 48%
- Knowledge needed for life in old age* - 38%
- Development of facilities and physical skills* - 33%
- Social, economic and political situation* - 14%
- Artistic creativity* - 10%
- Communication skills* - 9%
- Use and preservation of the environment* - 9%
- Cultivation of family, cultural and historical values* - 8%

The heterogeneous nature of the elderly population, their needs and interests, educational capacities and the degree of their social exclusion, on the one hand, and examples of good practice in the education of the elderly in some sectors, especially in the non-governmental sector, should be accepted by the University of the Third Age as a strength and a challenge.

*prof.Ph.D.Snežana Medić
Manager of the Project of The
University of the third Age*



UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE - FIRST FIFTEEN YEARS -

As is the case in many so-called developed countries, older people in our country are becoming an ever larger social group, with a constant tendency of growth. The demographic aging of the population is the result of the prolongation of the human lifespan on the one hand, and on the other, of the reduction in the birth rate. For some time now the United Nations have been drawing international attention to this growing phenomenon, and in accordance with this, they declared 1994 and 1999 years of care for the elderly.

According to the census results in 1991 in Serbia, the number of people age 60 or older has reached the figure of 1.5 million or 16.0% of the total population. Compared to the first post-war census results in 1948, the number of seniors (575 thousand) has increased by a factor of 2.5, while the proportion of the elderly in the overall population has nearly doubled. Such a proportion of the elderly in the overall population relegates Serbia and Montenegro to the twelve oldest nations in the world.

In our country the creation of conditions for educating the elderly, as well as widespread educational

practices, are still in the very early stages. With a very real, near-future perspective of having 25% of the population above the age of 65, Europe has developed over the past thirty years a series of diverse possibilities for educating older citizens. Various institutions that work on educating pensioners, under the name University of the Third Age or some other name, exist in virtually every European urban center: London, Rome, Milan, Paris, Dortmund, Barcelona, Copenhagen, Glasgow, etc. In our vicinity, Universities of the Third Age exist in Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia. All of them share one common desire to improve the quality of life of people of the third age through their programs.

The University of the Third Age was officially opened on November 10, 1989. Its founders are: the Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, which provided the theoretical grounding and drafted the University's programs; TV Belgrade's Educational Programming Department, which assisted in presenting the idea of the need for establishing a University of the Third Age to the public at large and for getting the support of the "Braća Stamenković" People's University, which provided the professional and financial conditions in establishing the University.



The University of the Third Age Project was part of a wider project of the Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy called "Adult Education and Social Changes". Project author Ph.D. Snežana Medić and associates Mirjana Milanović and Svetlana Živanić, used the experiences of 18 European Universities of the Third Age in drafting the framework of this University, along with the results of various research on the characteristics of the elderly population in Belgrade and Serbia.

The meager experience of our educational practice in the area of education of the elderly resulted in the decision to make the programs at the University of the Third Age experimental in nature, while monitoring of the educational groups and the experiences learned during the first semester would be used as guidelines in undertaking further activities in establishing this University.

According to the project, educational organization was divided into six program units, symbolically demarcated with corresponding colors, covering the widest areas of human knowledge and creation. Each program unit included a larger set of sub-programs which provided the basis for establishing educational groups.

Green program

(program for maintaining and advancing man's environment) -this program included educational subjects that contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between living creatures and their environment, and the maintenance and development of the quality of the living environment. Among other things, the program includes the following program sections: health food, alternative energy sources, horticulture, etc.

Red program

(program for maintaining and advancing man's health) – the objective of this program was to inform the elderly about the health characteristics and problems associated with the third age, and to help them, through the latest scientific achievements, to maintain good health and physical shape. The possible sub-programs within this program unit are: medicine, psychology,





nutrition, interantional programs in the area of health prevention, etc.

Blue program

(program for maintaining and developing cultural-historical values) – The educational subjects covered by this program unit were supposed to bring our cultural heritage closer to seniors, to allow them to learn about it and to inspire them to undertake various forms of cultural creation, creativity, maintaining of the cultural tradition, etc. Within this program it is possible to differentiate between the following sub-programs: history, philosophy, ethnology, history of art, archeology, etc.

Pink program

(program for maintaining artistic values and artistic abilities) – the objective of this program was to teach students about the most significant achievements in various areas of art and to train them for mastering artistic skills and abilities, as preconditions for independent artistic creation. The specific sections in this program are the following: visual art, applied art, the art of music, literature, theater-stage arts, etc.

White program

(program for maintaining and developing language and communication cultures) – besides the possibility of learning specific languages,

this program was designed to include a study group for reporting and journalism which would deal with the publicizing of works that come out of the other study groups, besides training students in becoming correspondents and associates of various papers and magazines. This program could be divided into the following sub-programs: foreign languages, languages of peoples and nationalities (tr. note – of the former Yugoslavia), classical languages, computer literacy, reporting and journalism, etc.

Spectrum program

(program for maintaining and developing manual skills and physical abilities) – the purpose of this program was to allow seniors to acquire various practical knowledge, skills and abilities which would allow them to advance the quality of their everyday life. It covers subjects that relate to various aspects of life in the family and the wider social environment, where the opening of a





U3A service was planned in which seniors would provide each other with services in accordance with their professional experience. Possible sub-programs within this program are: pedagogy skills, hand-work, cooking, vocational skills, sport and recreation, social games, hobby activities, etc.

Given that the program orientation of the University of the Third Age defined by the Project is very broad, it was decided that during the first semester only those program groups would be set up for which there was sufficient interest among students who signed up for classes. In this way, by respecting the desires and needs of the people for whom the University is intended and by respecting the working principle of the University of the Third Age, which presumes maximum student participation in resolving a number of issues, three educational groups were established with a total of 45 students:

- painting* (20 students);
- English language* (12 students);
- health program with recreation* (13 students).

It should be emphasized that these three programs have remained the pivotal point for the interests of seniors here, having continued to be presented over the fifteen years and having attracted the greatest number of students. The only program that

compares in terms of student interest with the three mentioned programs is the computer training program, but it started operating only since 1998. Namely, until that time there was virtually no interest in this program. The departure of many young people abroad and their parents' need to communicate with them over the Internet resulted in the English language and computers becoming the most popular programs in the past two years.

The wealth of programs offered at the University of the Third Age over the past fifteen years reflects the breadth of interest of members of this generation and the variety of their needs (see Table no. 1). It should be emphasized that the listed information only refers to those students who attended any one program for at least one full academic year, i.e. that students who dropped out of a program for whatever reason were not taken into consideration. Also, the listed information does not cover students who attended shorter programs, such as lectures, speaker's platforms, artistic evenings, etc., but only students who enrolled in one of the educational groups at the University of the Third Age. If we were to add these excluded groups of students to the presented information, the total number of students during the period considered would exceed 6,000.



1	VISUAL ART (drawing and painting, watercolors, portrait, iconography)	1526
2	FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM (English, German, French, Spanish)	1134
3	COMPUTER TRAINING (Windows, Word, Internet)	679
4	PROGRAM OF PHYSICAL CULTURE (recreation, yoga, tai chi)	433
5	HISTORY (art history and history of Christianity)	173
6	APPLIED ART (patchwork, weaving, macramé, ceramics, engraving, art photography)	99
7	HEALTH PROGRAM	53
8	DANCE SCHOOL	33
9	VOCATIONAL SKILLS (tailoring and sewing, home decoration)	22
10	ART OF MUSIC	41
11	MEDICINAL HERBS	11
12	PSYCHOLOGY	9
13	MASSAGE AND SELF-MASSAGE COURSE	7
14	FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS	6
15	LITERATURE	5
	Total	4204



The presented programs were offered to seniors through various educational forms: lectures, seminars, courses, workshops, "small schools", exhibitions, outings, colonies, summer schools, film and video projections, promotions, speaker's platforms and round tables, study tours, artistic evenings, etc. The interest, high motivation and wealth of life and professional experience of the students of this generation resulted in the fact that students of the University prefer an active role to a passive one in the educational process, which the organizers and lecturers need to keep in mind during the process of planning and programming of classes.

Besides the possibility of joining one of the mentioned programs, the University of the Third Age offers its students an opportunity to make new friends, to have fun, to travel, as well as to assert themselves by presenting their works at numerous exhibitions, of which there were seventy since the inception of the University to today.

The results achieved in the realization of this Project indicate that the tasks and objectives which were defined at the beginning were largely realized and that the assumption that this area of education has its specific characteristics which demand a professional approach in

designing a new, practically verified educational model, proved to be correct. The lessons learned in the work thus far indicate that adequate training of the teaching staff for working with seniors is necessary, along with specific organization of educational work, plans and programs adapted to needs, as well as to the psychological and physical abilities of students in this age bracket, etc.

Still, it should be mentioned that because of the lack of wider support in society and the lack of financial support, some of the initial ideas have remained unrealized. Here we primarily refer to the designing and realization of the program of preparation for retirement and the third age, conducting of research on the relation between education and quality of life in old age, training of volunteers for working in this field, establishing of





cooperation and exchange of experiences with similar institutions in the world, designing of a program for intergenerational cooperation, establishing of an information and counseling center for seniors, etc.

Relying on the resources of the several institutions that organize the University of the Third Age is certainly not sufficient for it to develop further and to expand its activities. The process of social reforms which began in our country several years ago opened up new possibilities for educating people in the third age. Plans of development associated with educational reform and social care for the elderly are heading toward approaching European standards in this area. This will prevent the isolation of the elderly and their inability of realizing their rights, which certainly include the need for education.



WHO ARE THE STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE?

One of the questions frequently asked by people interested in the University of the Third Age is who are the students attending this University? The response to this question was provided by an analysis of the questionnaires filled out by students in the 2003/2004 academic year at the University of the Third Age – “Braća Stamenković” People’s University. It should be noted that we made a decision about the sample, in spite of the fact that we did not have precise data for the entire Network of the University of the Third Age, although we expect that the results provided by this sample correspond to the student demographics information for the aggregate data for the entire Network. 230 questionnaires were analyzed from which we got information on gender, age, educational level, as well as information about marital status and the number of family members in a household within the chosen sample. The mentioned students attended classes in the following five programs: painting, yoga, English language, patchwork and computer training.

As far as gender is concerned, students attending the University of the Third Age are mostly women. As

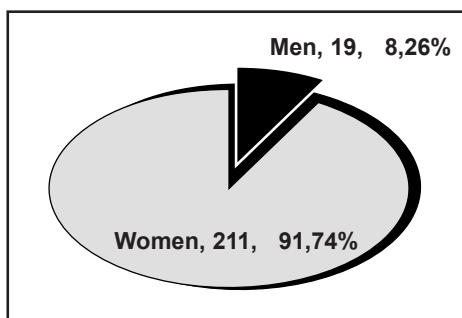


can be seen in the following pie chart (Chart no. 1), among the enrolled students, 211 are women, which amounts to 91.73%.

The causes for this makeup of the student body, of course, should not be sought in the general population (even though it is known that there really are more women than men), and explanations about this range from traditional attitudes to the role of women in society, to gender mentality differences.

Retirement certainly affects life changes, and hence the needs of seniors. As a rule, women are more centered on the household, compared to men, and they spend more time doing domestic chores. When they retire they are faced with a surplus of free time and are ready to use that time for educating themselves, while men, contrary to this, probably already have developed habits and ways of using their free

Chart no. 1: Gender makeup of students



time. Besides this, there are suggestions that men develop deeper ties with their professions and the fields they worked in, and during retirement strive to maintain contact with their professions.

Practitioners in this area often note that women are more outgoing in this period of life than men, they make friends more easily, are more communicative and more ready for making new contacts. Men who enroll are often initially reserved, while a small number retains this reserved attitude to the very end.

As far as gender differences and attendance in particular programs is concerned, there are programs that are exclusively "for women", such as tailoring, sewing, knitting, embroidery, patchwork, etc. Programs such as foreign languages, painting and recreation have one to two men per group. A slight increase in the number of male students compared to previous years is the result of new courses for computer training which started in 1998, for which both sexes demonstrate interest.

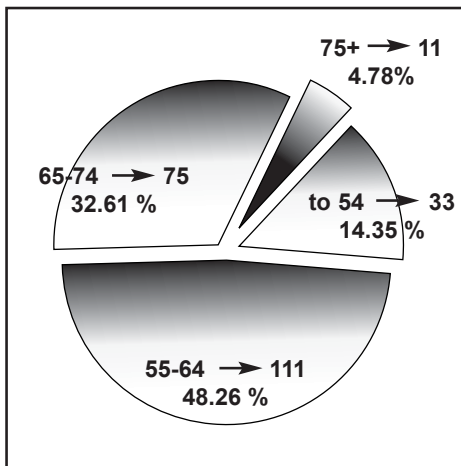
Finally, it should be noted that information on gender is in no way specific for our University of the Third Age, within the context of experiences in Europe and across the World. It appears that, generally speaking, women demonstrate a



greater need for taking part in the University's programs. However, where our University of the Third Age differs with respect to others is the age makeup of the student body. The widely accepted criterion on what the "third age" represents is age 65 and older. As can be seen in the pie chart below (Chart no. 2), according to this criterion and based on analysis of questionnaires, only 76 students (37.39%) belong to the third age. The reason for such an age makeup is that the age limit which defines the "third age" has been lowered, for the principal criterion is pensioner status.

What can also be observed from the chart is that the majority of students are between ages 55 and 64,

Chart no. 2: Age makeup of students



and together with students below age 54 they make up well over half of the student body (62.61%).

There is certainly more than one reason for this, although the most important one can be ascribed to the fact that amid extensive social, economic and transitional changes in our country, in recent years people have been going into retirement a lot earlier. Also, the high number of pensioners is also augmented by the fairly high number of disability pensioners.

Beside the fact that there is an ever increasing number of "young" pensioners, the other reason for the high number of students below age 65 is that one of the objectives and activities of the University of the Third Age is to prepare people for retirement. This means that the University of the Third Age also accepts and enrolls individuals who are before retirement.

The small number of students who are above age 75 is also noticeable. There are also several reasons for this: they probably have greater health problems, they are less likely to opt for distant locations because of poor public transportation, and it is also possible that they have less self-confidence and are less sure of their learning abilities. It is precisely for these



reasons and because of this segment of the elderly population that the expansion of the Network of the University of the Third Age is that much more significant, for in this way the University is spreading out across the country, thus making its programs more accessible to seniors everywhere. Certainly, it will take time during which the Network will expand further in order that we can verify the correctness of this assertion.

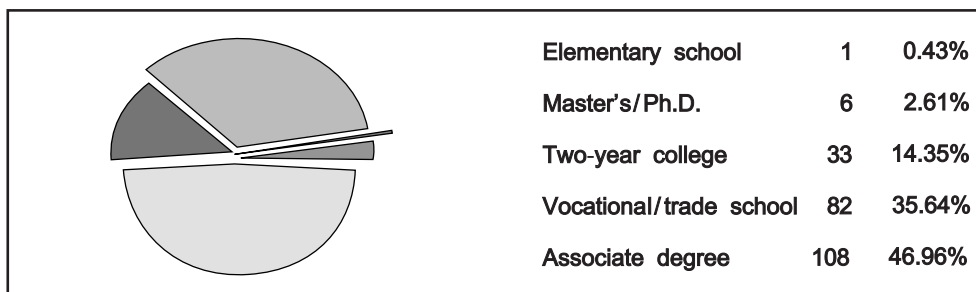
The makeup of students in terms of levels of education is presented in pie Chart no. 3. The largest number of students whose questionnaires were analyzed have higher education (46.98%).

If we make the assumption, and many writers follow this line of thinking, that educational levels influence participation in educational activities, then this data is hardly surprising. Adult educational science supports the notion that more educated individuals have greater educational needs, and therefore they

are more prone to taking part in educational programs. This also explains the strikingly small number of individuals who have only completed secondary school. However, the number of highly educated individuals is also fairly small (2.61%). Our assumption is that they probably devote themselves more to their professions which engage their time and fulfill their interests, and it is also very likely that they have become used to independent work and self-education. We assess positively the fact that the number of students with secondary education is fairly high, for in combination with the previous argument, this means that there are strong motives for taking part in educational programs and that the level of education does not represent a barrier in this sense, where this category of students are concerned.

Data on marital status and number of family members in a household does not support the argument that

Chart no. 3: Level of education of students





members of the third age take part in programs at the University of the Third Age because of a sense of loneliness. As can be seen in pie Chart no. 4, over half the students included in this analysis are currently married (55.65%), while data on the number of family members in a household (Chart no. 5) indicates that only 25.22% live alone.

Certainly, a more thorough analysis of the motives would provide a more realistic picture of the reasons why students come to the University and attend its programs.

However, regardless of what the motives for enrollment at the University are, it is inevitable that the number of students will increase, given the increase in the number of seniors, the popularization of adult education and the fact

that new pensioners are more highly educated individuals. The number of people who, once they retire, will feel the need for acquiring new knowledge and skills will only increase. In this way they opt for maintaining independence, increasing their self-confidence, developing their abilities, making social contacts, making new friends and meeting new people. Thus, the possibility of getting educated provides the older generations with the ability of keeping in step with the rest of the population, and of taking part in social developments in spite of their age, making their lives more meaningful.

Tamara Nikolić
Expert associate for education

Chart no. 4: Marital status of students

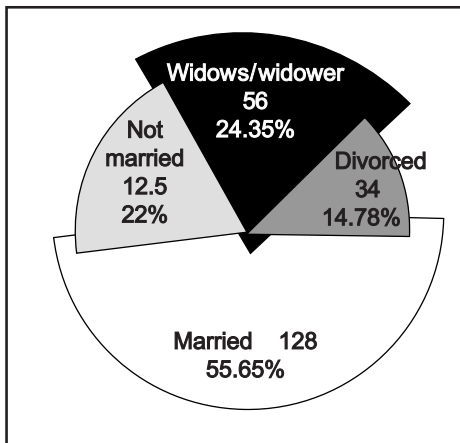
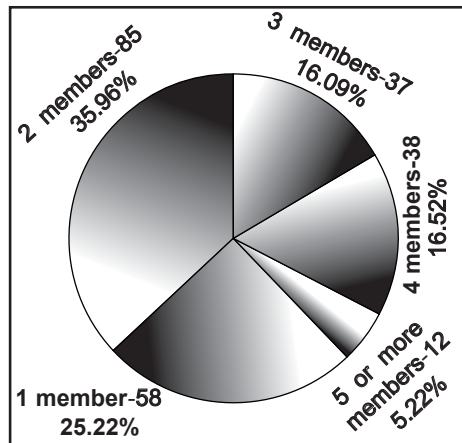


Chart no. 5: Number of family members in a students household





NETWORK OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

From its inception the University of the Third Age has been cooperating with numerous cultural and educational institutions, as well as social care institutions, and not just in Belgrade, but throughout the country. Attempts were made on several occasions to implement its programs in some of them, but without appreciable success.

At the beginning of 2002 the Institute of Pedagogy and Andragogy at the Faculty of Philosophy, in cooperation with the Adult Education Society, initiated a new project named "Expanding the Network of Universities of the Third Age". The carrier of the project was the "Braća Stamenković" People's University which has vast experiences and has achieved important results in this field as one of the founders of the University of the Third Age. The following institutions were chosen as partners: "Božidar Adžija" People's University, "Đuro Salaj" A.D., KOC "Čukarica", Open University of Novi Sad, "Pavle Stojković" People's University from Niš and the Gerontology Center in Vršac. These institutions demonstrated readiness for expanding their programs and their professional work with completely new content

and with entirely new students – people of the third age.

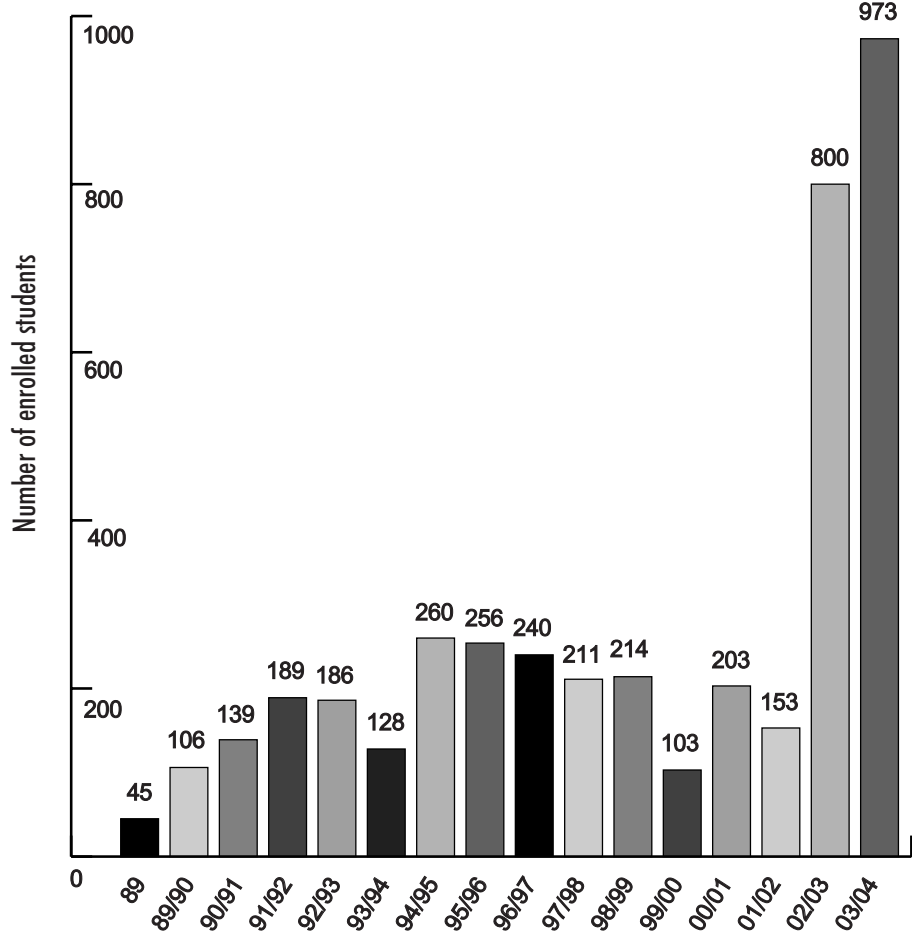
The gerontology Center in Vršac was included in the Project of Expanding the Network of Universities of the Third Age with the objective of opening up social care institutions to their surroundings and of organizing various programs for all interested seniors, and not just for a social care institution's users.

During the first phase of the project training was organized for staff members who were preparing to implement the University of the Third Age program in the mentioned institutions through training, demonstration classes and study tours to the University of the Third Age which is part of the "Braća Stamenković" People's University. Also, a one-day seminar was organized with a view to completely informing all participants in the Network of the activities which are necessary for constituting the University of the Third Age. Staff training for work in this field of education, which is specific in many respects, represents one of the most significant effects of the expansion of the Network of the University of the Third Age, given that it is precisely the shortage of adequately trained staff which represents one of the main barriers to their further development.

In phase two of the Project, a diag-



Enrolment according to academic years
(period from 1989 - 2004)





nostic process was carried out in institutions which were selected as partners in terms of space, staff, financial and other resources. After analyzing existing potentials, a joint media campaign began in the autumn of 2002 for promoting the Network of the University of the Third Age, along with the setting up of the first educational groups and the beginning of classes. All activities in the Network were coordinated, while the Belgrade partners realized numerous joint programs, as well as student exchanges.

The results achieved in this Project exceeded all initial expectations. Analysis of figures for the last two academic years indicates that the expansion of the Network of the University of the Third Age led to a significant increase in the total number of students, which is very well illustrated by the Chart on the previous page. Also, the programs offered by the University of the Third Age has been enriched by programs which were not offered previously (e.g. dance school, ceramics workshop, massage course, flower arrangements, history of theater and acting, etc.), which was one of the objectives of this Project. The expansion of the Network of the University of the Third Age allowed for improvements in organizing so-called joint programs, given that space was

enlarged, as well as staff potentials and financial conditions. Given that enrollment dropped off at the "Pavle Stojković" People's University and all necessary conditions were not met for continuing with this Project, this partner is no longer part of the Network of the University of the Third Age. Since the academic year 2004/2005, the Workers' University in Smederevo has become a new partner in the Project.

It should be emphasized that there is interest in many towns for joining the Network of the University of the Third Age: Subotica, Zrenjanin, Kragujevac, Bor, Užice, Milanovac, Leskovac, Podgorica, etc. Also, many institutions and organizations in Belgrade are demonstrating willingness to cooperate with the University of the Third Age and to join its Network.

It is quite certain that with time the Network will expand further and will become enriched, which is one of the priorities of the plan of development of the University of the Third Age.

Svetlana Živanić

Coordinator of the Network of the University of the Third Age



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DOOR WIDE OPEN FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

The Gerontology Center in Vršac is the youngest social care institution in our country, having opened in 1999. It began taking in residents in 2000, providing lodging, meals, medical care, and leisure activities (recreational, occupational and cultural-entertainment activities) for the elderly and for pensioners. In year 2002, together with the Adult Education Society in Belgrade and with the friendly help from partner organizations, and especially from the “Braća Stamenković” Peoples’ University, as the project leader, the Gerontology Center in

Vršac became part of the “Expanding the Network of the University of the Third Age” Project.

In spite of numerous problems that we were faced with at the beginning, with some of them still continuing to plague us today (unresolved legislative constraints, etc.), the University of the Third Age which is part of the Gerontology Center in Vršac has become well known not just in our town, but well beyond it. The highly professional work of our associates who were previously trained by the staff of the Gerontology Center in working with the elderly and pensioners, the visible satisfaction of students in various groups, the enrolment level, as





well as the participation of fellow citizens in fulfilling various non-material needs and interests, are all indicators of our work thus far. To this we should add that our institution took part in the Second Adult Education Festival, and organized the Third Festival at the regional level (the townships of Kovačica, Plandište, Alibunar, Bela Crkva and Vršac), with the participation of a great number of various organizations, institutions and associations, a significant number of educational programs and the enormous satisfaction of participants, as well as of persons who took part in preparing the festival's events. All this contributed to our institution and our profession being presented in a



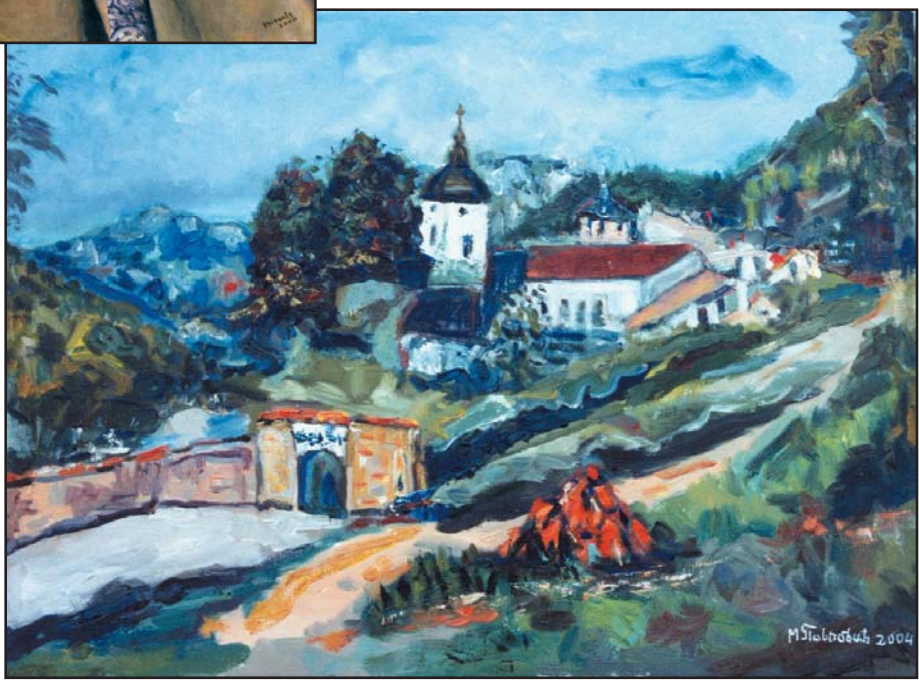
positive light, while drawing public attention to the fact that the elderly and pensioners are not a marginalized group, and that their needs are not solely of a material nature.

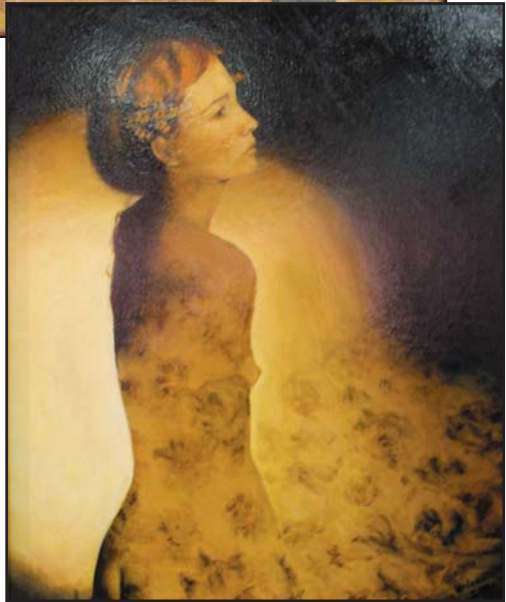
Beside these, also worth mentioning are other results of the University of the Third Age of which the Gerontology Institute is a part, and which relate to the raising of the general quality of life of elderly persons: adopted and expanded knowledge and its utility value, fulfillment of psychological and emotional needs, etc.

We sincerely hope that legislative changes in the area of social care, increased investments, as well as appropriate standardization of the University of the Third Age will find their way to other communities also, to the greater satisfaction of the elderly and pensioners, first and foremost.

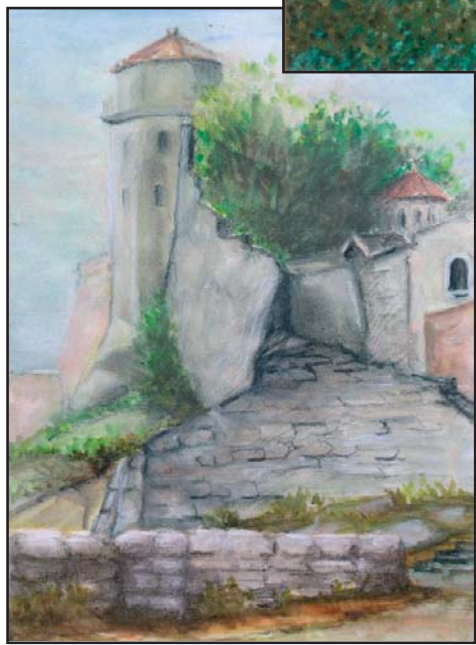
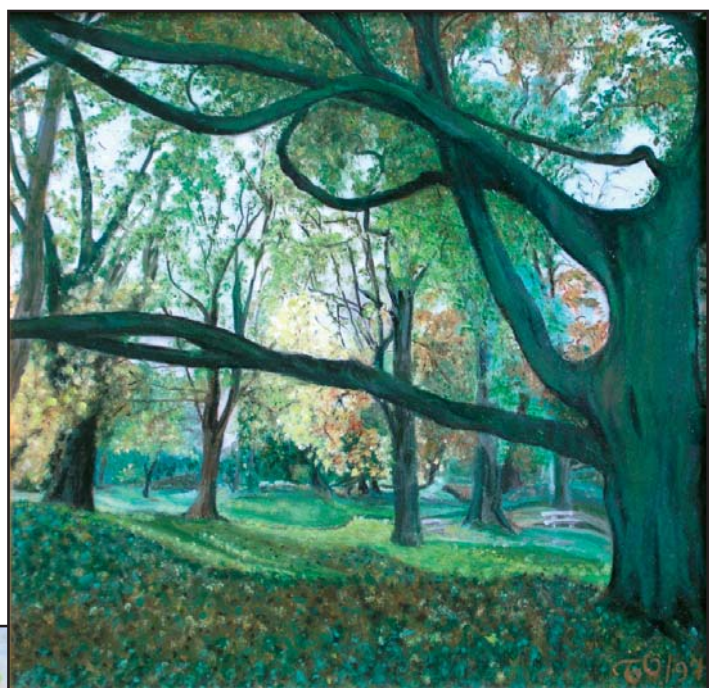
The Gerontology Center in Vršac will continue to work on further improving the quality of the University of the Third Age, as well as on expanding current groups – of course, taking as the starting point the needs and interests of the oldest citizens in our community.

*Sava Baračkov
Work therapist at the
Gerontology Center*











Prof. Ph.D. Dušan Savićević's book "Learning and Aging" deals with various phenomena which are directly or indirectly reflected in the learning and aging processes and in their mutual interrelationships.

In December 2004, on the occasion of the anniversary of the University of the Third Age, the Adult Education Society organized a promotion of this book.



Since January 7, 2005, the Adult Education Society and the Network of the University of the Third Age are silent partners on the PEFETE Project



FROM THE THIRD INTO THE NEW AGE

In spite of the fact that computer literacy, i.e. computer training, constituted an integral part of the programs offered at the University of the Third Age from its very beginning, there was nearly no interest in this program. Attempts at promoting it, emphasis of the good results achieved in this program in other places, efforts at overcoming bias against and resistance to computers, all bore no fruit. Simply put, the majority of people in the third age simply did not want to make an effort, believing that “this is for the young”, “they need it more”, “they lived their whole lives without a computer, and are very happy to continue that way.”

The process of the deep social crisis which gripped our country in the early nineties, among other things, resulted in one very pronounced phenomenon, and that was the departure of many young people into other countries. Their parents, the majority of whom were in the so-called third age, wanting to communicate in the fastest, simplest and cheapest way with their children, began getting interested in Internet training. However, until the Gray Web project began, it is not really possible to speak about any significant results in this program.

The Gray Web project was realized in cooperation with **Radio B92** and the **Fund for an Open Society** (who secured an adequately equipped Internet Classroom at the American Cultural Center, along with trained instructors) and the **University of the Third Age** (whose expert associates, Irina Semjonov and Svetlana Živanić, were in charge of training instructors in working with seniors and oversaw student enrollment, group selection and direct monitoring of achieved results). The project was realized from February to August 1998 and during that time over 150 students underwent training, of which one third were students from the University of the Third Age.

It should be stressed that pensioners completely accepted the Internet as a new form of communication, and that there were no difficulties in mastering the necessary knowledge and skills. Also, it turned out that the majority were interested in additional, expanded training, which initiated the second phase of the Project, whose objective was the opening of an Internet Classroom intended exclusively for seniors. Different programs would be organized as part of it in response to their needs.

The first step in establishing the

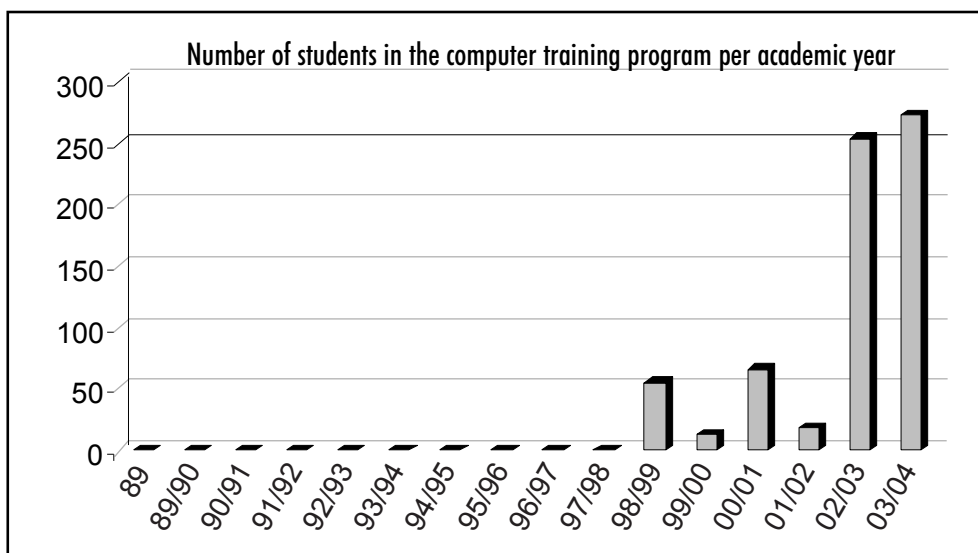


second phase of the Project was the purchase and installation of equipment and software for the Internet Classroom which was located at the “Braća Stamenković” People’s University, where all the other programs of the University of the Third Age were realized. After this, starting in September 1988, training of operators for working in the Internet Classroom followed. Twelve seniors who underwent basic training were chosen on the basis of assessments made by the instructors and coordinators, as well as on the basis of personal interest. Training for the operators lasted three weeks, and after this seniors initially worked in tandem with younger instructors, and later independently on training new seniors.

The opening of the Internet Classroom exclusively devoted to pensioners led to far greater interest not just for the Internet, but for other types of training, above all for Windows and for MS Word.

It should be mentioned that the Classroom was opened 10 hours per day and that everyone who did not own a computer had an opportunity, with the help of an instructor, to practice applying newly acquired knowledge.

Unfortunately, the fire which ravaged the facilities of the “Braća Stamenković” Peoples’ University at the end of 1999 completely damaged the computer equipment in this Classroom and put it out of





operation, where it has not been renovated to this very day.

The interest among seniors for computer literacy which was initiated by this Program has contributed to computer training becoming one of the programs which today attracts the most interest and enjoys the highest enrollment among elderly students in all the institutions of the Network of the University of the Third Age.

Mr. Ljuba Jakovljević, one of the operators of the Internet Classroom, said with exultation that owing to the Gray Web project many went from the third age into the new age.



IMPRESSIONS FROM THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSE

When I decided to enroll at the University of the Third Age, my reasons were very practical – I wanted to learn the English language. However, within one year my expectations turned into complete exultation. The time spent in class provides me with great pleasure: agreeable atmosphere, very compact group, good friendship... I particularly wish to draw attention to the high level of professionalism and, above all, patience of our English teacher, Ms. Anđelka Pejčić. Owing to her vast experience, her every class provides real pleasure and intellectual satisfaction. It seems to me that this is very important for all of us in the group, at our age, given that it *is* the third age.

Finally, not to forget one important thing!!!

There is special charm in our recesses, when we drink coffee and chat, so that all this is far more than just the learning of a language.

*Svetlana Stokić
student in the English language
program*



”PEOPLES UNIVERSITY BOŽIDAR ADŽIJA” SOMETHING DIFFERENT

How beautiful and full of new challenges life can be is best seen at the University of the Third Age program.

Authentic value and beauty makes our communication unforgettable. Of course, I am thinking of all of us. And I expect you to join us.

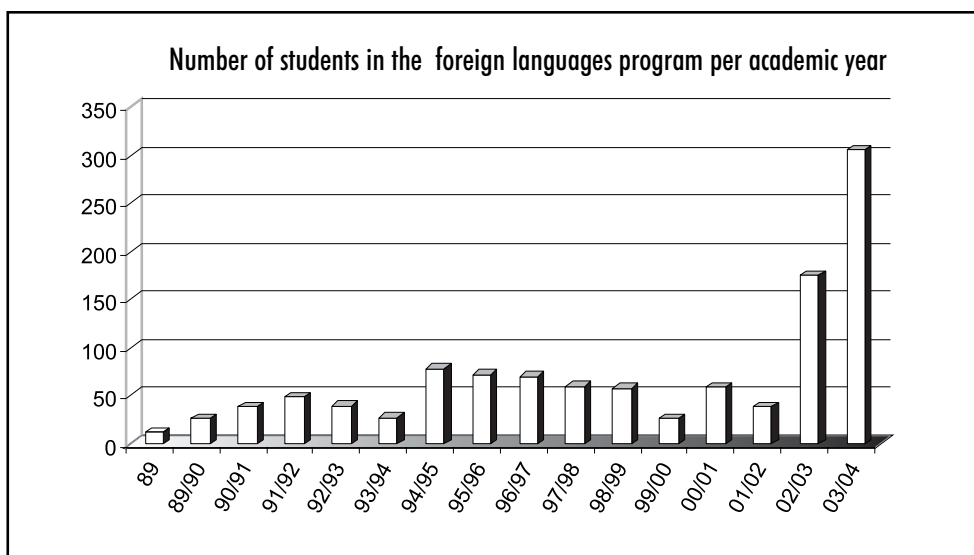
That which you always desired, to realize your secret or public loves – now you can.

It is a pleasure being with you. You make this Project exciting: painting, reciting, singing, playing instruments, acting, learning languages, and through traveling you discover new regions and cultures.

And where do we stand in all this?

The University of the Third Age and I are there to stand together, to support you and not to let you give up...

Ankica Poljakov
foreign language program mentor





WHAT IS TAI CHI CHUAN?

Tai chi chuan is one of the finest products of Chinese culture. It is a unique and universal skill which leads to profound relaxation of the body and the mind.

Tai chi movements are light and without power, synchronized with the nature of breathing. All the muscles, joints and tendons, internal organs, blood vessels and vital energy move in light, natural motion. All acupuncture points are stimulated through motion. No power or speed is required, making this skill accessible to everyone, the old and the young alike, to women and men, to the healthy and the ill.

The positive effects of this skill: it strengthens bones and joints, suppleness of tendons and muscles, regulates nervous system functions, alleviates stress and blockage of the body, and strengthens the immune system.

Breathing during tai chi is natural, easy and deep, in harmony with the movements that fluidly follow each other. While practicing tai chi one feels joy and a sense of oneness with nature.

Tai chi chuan is an excellent relaxation exercise for older people that

can protect them from inactivity and problems that are associated with old age.

Before exercising form – a series of exercises that we call tai chi – we first do certain exercises of stretching and uncovering of energy channels, so-called meridians. This is a complex of exercises that helps the body warm up and establishes concentration. There are also exercises that are performed mentally, breathing exercises, stretching of joints and opening of energy channels, self-massage exercises, all of which improve the flow of vital energy. Trained muscles are not required in tai chi, nor is special mental concentration required. All that is needed is the decision to devote some time to one self and to one's body.





It is important to approach the exercises openly and with love, and then it will be possible to accept a different, natural way of life.

It helps me to develop a better and deeper attitude to my surroundings, the environment, and especially to nature” - *Branka Bukumirović.*

My ten years of experience: I halted my illness. I have arthritis in both knees, high blood pressure, angina pectoris. I am 66, I feel young, full of positive energy and health, and I can say the same for my fellow exercisers.

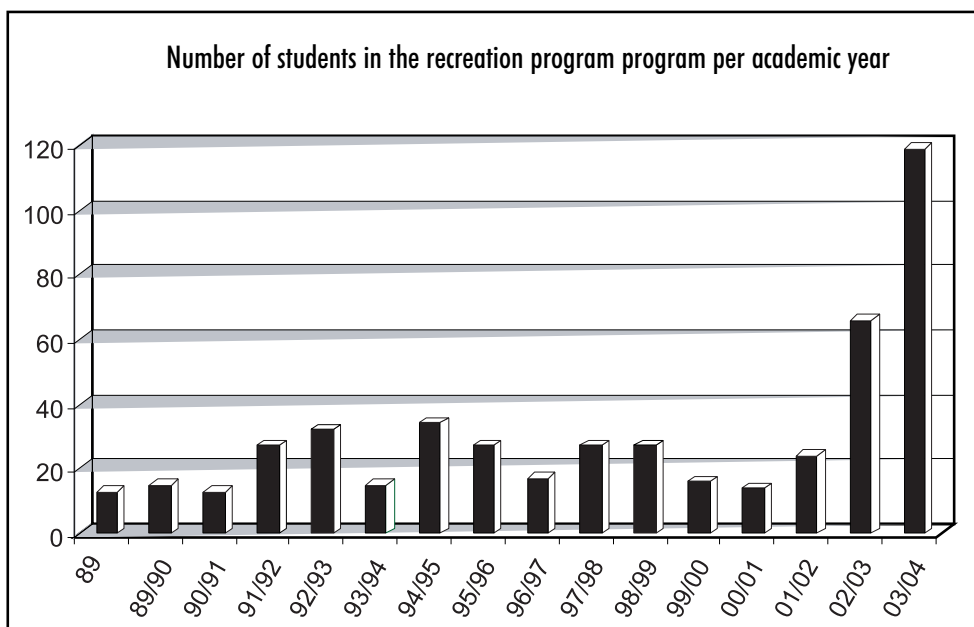
“I have achieved inner peace, and physically I have reached my objective” – *Živka.*

These are some of the experiences of the students of Tai chi chuan: “I am more cheerful. Not an hour passes by without my laughing.

“The pain which was very strong has become bearable” – *Dragođa.*

“There is something creative in it – choreographic. The creative moment can be felt” – *Mirjana Bajić.*

Jelisaveta Mićunović
Tai chi instructor





YOGA

Yoga is the science of the body, of the spirit and the mind, having originated in ancient India from where it was disseminated throughout the world. It arrived to our country in the last century and represents a veritable discovery.

For the body, health represents a condition for survival, although not necessarily its natural state. Nature does everything in its power to sustain health and the species, and if we respect its laws, we will have a better chance of reaching old age in good

health. "Nature never intended for man to part with good health before reaching old age. If everyone were to respect the laws of nature from childhood, instead of constantly working against them, death from sickness in youth or during the age of maturity would be just as rare as death in an accident," the famous yogi Ramacharkha said. Therefore, the claim in yoga is that we cause our own illnesses and that we are obliged to heal our abused bodies. Namely, we are obliged to be healthy and to grow old in good health; a sick man is a burden to himself and to his environment and society. Yoga provides a path to complete healing and can be practiced by all ages, by both sexes, by the sick





and the healthy, the fat and the thin, in one word – by everyone. The path to healing can begin by mastering one’s mind or one’s body or... The paths are many. In our region it is generally accepted that one must firstly master one’s body. This type of yoga is called hata yoga.

Hata yoga consists of three large segments: position of the body, control of breathing and directing of awareness. These segments are mutually tightly connected and cannot be practiced separately.

If instructions are followed regularly and in a disciplined way, exceptional results can be achieved even in very old age and with the gravest illnesses. Because of such results, many of the top medical centers are investigating the effects of yoga. Its beneficial effect on the system of bone joints is well known, along with its effects on the cardiovascular, nervous and endocrine systems, etc.

Yoga is used extensively in therapy and in prevention (for maintaining health and improving the quality of life).

The experiences of the yoga students at the University of the Third Age clearly confirm its mentioned capacities.

*Emilija Pavlovic,
yoga instructor*

WHY DO I PRACTICE YOGA ???

“Initially twice, and soon after three times per week, one and a half hour exercises contributed to my feeling a whole new person – more vivacious, full of vitality, health, with far more desire for work and with a better attitude toward the people around me. I was depressed, lacked will and was often ill spirited. I have been practicing yoga for more than a year and I simply cannot imagine life without exercising... I advise everyone who can, irrespective of years, to practice yoga and to become personally convinced of its value for mental and physical health.”

Ljiljana Dimitrijević, 72 yrs.

“I still do not belong to the third age, although I am very close to it. I came quite by accident, having received a free course. Yoga has won me over to such a degree that I do not skip almost any classes... The woman that practice with me have been attending the classes for a longer time, and whenever I see how beautifully they perform even the most difficult exercises, I simply feel satisfied, for this inspires me with hope that I am not doing something futile – that a beautiful future awaits me.”

Dragica Ranković, 53 yrs.

“What was a real discovery for me



and the reason why I regret not having discovered yoga earlier (I began at 46, and have been practicing it for twelve years) is the general transformation in my state of mind. Of course, I did not stop just at physical exercises, I learned a few things from the literature, but the real transformation occurred when I began exercising in an organized way, especially at the University of the Third Age. With expert guidance through the positions (asana) and practicing of other branches of yoga (breathing, relaxation), I divined the extent of the reservoirs of unused energy that lie hidden within us, and how much we ourselves can improve the quality of our lives with the help of yoga.”

Ljiljana Racković, 58 yrs.

“When in a state of difficult physical and mental crisis I came to my first yoga class, I knew that this was the right thing. I found myself in this, found health for my body, not to mention the mental relief. The exercises adapted to our age are simply fantastic...”

Vera Stanković, 65 yrs.

“To me yoga appeared too static, but it turned out that the exercises are full of dynamism. With the assistance and selfless care of the instructor Emilija Pavlović, already after three months I began feeling much better. My movements are

very youthful, I kneel and get up without any great problems. I am satisfied with the fact that from one class to the next I make increasing progress. During each class we warm up and work every muscle and joint. We learn how to breath correctly, how to establish self-control of the body and the mind... Yoga allowed me to feel more energetic, and therefore more happy.”

Mirjana Gledić, 62 yrs.

“Since I started practicing yoga ten years ago, I have to admit that I have become addicted and that I enjoy it very much. I started practicing with very unpleasant discomfort that disappeared with time. I have become fit in a way that I never was before, acquiring the habit of practicing, and I even made new friends...”

Mirjana Utornik, 69 yrs.





FROM A SINGLE PATCH TO AN ARTWORK

At the time when I graduated from the Interior Design Department at the Academy of Applied Arts I never imagined that one day I will be an adult educator.

I dedicated myself to my profession, drafting interior designs, designs of furniture, packaging, clothing, objects for everyday use, and for a number of years I worked as a jewelry designer.

I mastered the patchwork technique* out of curiosity, educating myself. Very soon after acquiring basic knowledge, I concluded that this art skill which is every little known here gives me the opportunity of executing my designs on my own, that I do not need too much space for it, nor do I need expensive fabrics – quite the contrary, most often my patchworks were made from old jeans cloathing. Over time I began exhibiting my patchworks publicly at exhibitions of the Association of Applied Visual Artists. Some of them are part of the permanent textiles collection at the Museum of Applied Art.

Five years ago I received an invitation from Kragujevac (a city in which many people suddenly lost their jobs) to hold a three-month patchwork course for a group of middle-aged women. The objective

was to train them for independent creative work that, depending on their skill and commercial ingenuity, could provide them with an additional source of income.

The results were very encouraging, which inspired me to look for an educational institution in Belgrade which would accept my patchwork technique training course. The institution was the University of the Third Age, the “Braća Stamenković” People’s University, where the program directors Mrs. Svetlana Živanić and Irina Semjonov, to my delight, willingly accepted the proposed beginner level training plan and program for patchwork. They believed in the whole idea and provided me with considerable support.

But, as is usually the case, the beginning was difficult. In April 2002 only five female students joined the first group. They were all “young” pensioners. We started work in a well adapted workshop, and we got all the necessary equipment, which presumed having as many sewing machines as there were students.

Already with this first group I unexpectedly had very positive experiences. All the students were exceptionally industrious, willing to learn as much as possible in class, they practiced at home very much, brought in their initial, beginner’s pieces, and were as happy as chil-



dren at every success and encouragement. As a teacher, what particularly stimulated me to provide them with as much as I could was the fact that all of them worked so hard, functioning as a single team in which no member individually stuck out. On the contrary, each student was as glad at the success of her fellow students as if the success was her own. They exchanged information on where to get equipment and materials at a good price, they borrowed the rare patchwork magazines which were hard to get at that time. In short, their desire and objective was to master the offered program together as best as they can.

They were not satisfied with basic knowledge and wanted to learn more, which resulted in the creation of the advanced training program.

With time, the number of students increased so that by September 2004, our enrollment included three beginners' and one advanced group.

The new students learned more about the patchwork courses by attending our exhibitions and by getting interested in the University of the Third Age through the media (written and electronic), thanks to which we got the necessary public support and popularity.

During the six enrollment cycles, basic training was completed by around fifty students. A small number of them (around one third) also complete the advanced course. There is interest in further development among a few students, so that starting in October 2005, we are planning to introduce a third level for patchwork in the program.





The minority of the students have completed high school, while the majority completed vocational schools or university. They are mostly pensioners, with a few of them having one year until retirement, while the smallest number of students became unemployed at the end of their working lives.

I noticed that most of them do some other type of handwork (sowing, knitting, needlepoint, weaving, silk painting...), even though there were students who knew nothing about these crafts – not even how to sow. They all shared the common desire to learn a skill which is not a part of our traditional hand-crafts heritage, even though it is very popular throughout the world,

and with the aid of which they could uniquely develop their personal creativity. The majority during the early classes demonstrated a good feeling for composition and color arrangements, which could not always be expected from ladies of their professions.

The motives for which they chose to enroll in the course differ and, simply put, could be categorized into several groups: They are not willing, when they retire, to spend the rest of their lives doing housework and serving their immediate families. They have a hard time accepting such a future and want to “break up” the monotony of the every day with some creative work.



The same motives are shared by students who have one year remaining until retirement. Many opt for learning in the third age, because that is the first time in their lives that they have an opportunity for doing something that they always wanted to do, and for which they did not have time while they were working. What I hear most often from them is: “My whole life I spent between home and work, now I want to do something for myself.” Some of them come in order to master a skill with which they can make decorative and useful pieces or clothing for their family



and friends, without a desire of making money from the acquired skill.

Others, on the other hand, believe that this new creative skill will allow them to make pieces that are easily saleable, which will bring them additional income. They mostly achieve this objective.

A special group are individuals whose children are “scattered around the globe” or women who suddenly lost their jobs. They are all in a kind of “vacuum” and patchwork classes keep them occupied with creative work that completely absorbs them and largely prevents them from thinking “gloomy thoughts”. I often heard ladies that fall into this group say: “This saved me from checking into the psychiatric ward” or “It’s better that I do something like this, instead of taking anti-anxiety pills.”

The majority of students enjoys the support of their families, although, unfortunately, there are those who lack that support, and because of family resistance they encounter difficulties in coming to class. Luckily, the number of such students is very small.

I think that it is very important to emphasize that the majority of students attends patchwork classes

because this provides them with an opportunity for making friends in a group that is gathered around common interests and goals. Even after the courses are completed, they continue to function as units, exchanging experiences and advice, literature and information on where necessary equipment and textiles can be purchased. They come to the University as to a second home, they make friends, and, which is most important, they accept participation in joint exhibitions that they often finance themselves.

Since 2002 they took part in exhibitions at the gallery of the “Braća Stamenković” and “Božidar Adžija” People’s Universities, they had a very well attended exhibition at the





Museum of Ethnography which was promoted by the media, and took part in the Adult Education Fair in 2002 and 2004, in the Days of Creative Seniors in 2003, and at the Regional Festival of Lifelong Learning, held in Skopje in 2003.

Their future activities include: in February 2005 they will have their own stall at the 2nd International Household Textile Fair, and in September 2005 they have a scheduled exhibition at the Gallery of the Museum of Ethnography, at the Studentski Trg in Belgrade.

For ladies of their age, everything listed indicates how much energy they possess, how organized they are and with how much solidarity they work, with the result being fairly impressive achievements.

Finally, I must add something: given that I work at the Academy of Fine Arts with freshmen in the Department of Interior and Furniture Design (I teach *Materials for Designing Interiors*), I am in a position to compare the approach and the desire for learning among young students in their twenties and ladies of the third age. The comparison is to the detriment of the younger generation. The students at the University of the Third Age, in spite of their considerable years, come to classes with what is for me an

unexpected amount of enthusiasm, happy to be doing what they are doing, joyful at every success – their own or that of their colleagues – making friendships... in one word: they appear physically and psychologically rejuvenated, which for me, as their teacher, presents a special stimulus.

This is the story about my “students”, but in it I also must add a few words about myself: I am also in the third age and the classes at the University of the Third Age are just as important for me, as they are for them, and they fill me with happiness and joy, just as they do for them. They are happy to be learning, and I am happy to be able to pass on the knowledge and the experience that I gathered over many years.

*Gorjana Ajzinberg
Director of the Patchwork Art
Workshop*

* *Patchwork is a very old textile technique that is executed by joining together (by hand or with a sewing machine) textile patches of various size, shape, color, design and texture, into a large whole. This procedure yields very diverse clothing, as well as ornamental and functional pieces for interiors.*



YEARS OF OUR LIVES

The lifecycle in its infinite variety, in its physical, psychological and social ebbs and flows, certainly appears to be outlined by its beginning and end – the universal and unalterable facts. Is this truly so, is the beginning and the end really there, are they such as we understand them, is this a cyclical circle or is it simply a linear progression, when we really depart and where we depart – there are no answers to these questions, or they are meager, one-sided – the imposed choice of desperation... In accepting the simplest, conformist answers, we accept stereotypes, without questioning generally accepted schemes, accepting



to lie in the procrustean bed of biological determinism. We accept to be plagued by doubts in our own powers and abilities, to see our lives as a fading wave, to interpret our development and its ebbs as the desperate grabbing at straws, and we spend time in nostalgic memories and illusions of the past, of youth which is always nicer in memories than it really was, of wishing for the strength which we never actually had... And a kind of life is always there, with us, some doors always remain open, we can always be useful, beautiful, wise, new, somewhere or to someone...

This broken, irregular and unpredictable line of our lives does not give us cause to be happy with certainty, nor to be afraid; without guarantees it promises, threatens toothlessly, showing a thousand faces, for which we are never sure which one will be ours. Stereotypes are of limited help when one life, given and granted, needs to be understood and navigated. Youth and old age are useful categories, but they are only useful for orientation. They tell nothing about fate, about quality, they do not suggest content, they leave no room for the Personality. They offer the certainty of false knowledge and the measure... They measure us with indubitable and one-sided criteria and useless knowledge. They tell us that

Note: This text has been taken from the catalogue of the exhibition of patchwork pieces created by students of the art workshop at the University of the Third Age which was opened on September 3, 2004



youth hears better, runs faster, has fewer wrinkles, greater immunity, wins more gold medals, finds a job more easily... These categories, which search out mainly characteristics of biophysical development, tell little about experience, about knowledge, fulfillment, about the strength to endure the things that cannot be changed, the courage to change those things that can be changed, the wisdom to differentiate between the two. There are no clear measures for what old age can provide us with, if we do not await it as punishment, but as a different possibility – understanding and accepting of the self, the finding of meaning, knowing how to live, the seeing of beauty and enjoyment in small things, learning what is desired, when and how it is desired, and, above all, the possibility of creating.

Creation – unburdened by ambition, economic considerations, illusions; creation for the beauty of creating, for the love of the Beautiful and of the creative process itself; creation, for it is immanent to man, for its essence is a cure; creation is loved and chosen, and when it is not required, when it is not imitated, when it is not followed, not feigned – that is the great privilege of old age. The liberation from fetters and various demands, led by the choice of the heart and by spiritual need, sincere toward the self and careless

toward the crowd, creation in old age brings pure Joy, primordial enjoyment of Creation and the visible fusion of the creator, the author, with his work.

Such works elevate the Beauty of the Everyday – a rarely acknowledged, but such a valuable skill – and therein lies their enormous importance. But beside this – they are Satisfaction and Fulfillment, they are proof of the power that this time of life carries with it and offers to us, and we often fail to recognize it and to exploit it. These creations can help us in this, helping us to open up and initiating us.

Katarina Popović, President of the Adult Education Society





MAGIC AND ELIXIR OF LIFE

The first and for now the only dance school in Serbia for people of the third age was established in 2002 in the “Djuro Salaj” People’s University. The executor of this unusual project of a group of enthusiasts during that time has been Ljiljana Korda, a young, but very experienced dancer with a sense for something new.

The first group had only six students. Over time, without any special advertising, beyond the usual “mouth to mouth”, that number increased to the current nineteen, which is also the maximum capacity of the current dance hall.

The dance program and its realization were adapted to the needs and abilities of the students, so that now it completely fulfils its purpose. It was conceived in accordance with the sentiments of the group, so that at no moment does it represent an effort or an obligation for the students. The age of the dancers has stopped being relevant.

This is proven by the increased interest among seniors for this type of entertainment and recreation. The ages of the students vary, from 74 and younger, with different educational levels and financial status, where all come together around a

single purpose – improving the quality of their lives. They were enthusiastically helped in achieving this goal, and continue to be helped by the dance instructor who showed them the initial steps of the waltz, the tango, foxtrot, rock n’ roll, rumba, samba, cha-cha-cha, bossa nova... in one word, the magic of dance.

Practice has shown that rhythmic and aesthetic movements, accompanied by well chosen music, relax and improve mood, and by returning control over the body, they also increase self-confidence. For dance is an ideal combination of education, entertainment and recreation.

During the first several classes students become familiar with the basic rules of dance – directions of move-





ment, rhythm and posture, and through correct practicing of movements, especially in standard dances, all the main muscles are activated and perfect posture is achieved. And when the first uncertain steps are mastered, the pleasure in the movement and the music begins. Bodily experience is often far more convincing than the spoken word. Fear disappears and is replaced by aspirations and positive energy. And not only that. The desire for life also returns. Students of the Dance School very soon begin to make friends outside of school, joined by the love of dance. Longer periods of working with seniors have shown other beneficial effects. It has been demonstrated that dance is a form of, not just psychological, but physical therapy, as well. Dance provides an exercise in fitness, from head to toe. It is an exercise in balance, movement, posture and breathing. In every dance one learns to control one's body. There are always steps that move certain parts of the body in a controlled way. Given that groups of movements are learned while dancing, it provides an interesting way of raising one's fitness level.

For those who tried and felt and realized that dance is **magic and an elixir of life**, it is known with certainty that they inform others of this. Still, the reality of life is such that

the experiences of the bravest individuals are not sufficient.

The Dance School at "Djuro Salaj" was established with minimal investment – in an existing hall which is used for other purposes, with one cassette player and the instructor's personal collection of cassettes. Now it has justified its existence and reached its maximum potential. For something more, it is clear that more than just words of support from friends and officials are needed. Others are on the move, and until they act, at "Djuro Salaj" the doors and the hearts will remain open for our fellow citizens, seniors, with the conviction that only healthy people, regardless of their age and in keeping with their abilities, contribute to the health of a society.

*Ljiljana Korda
dance instructor*





DANCE AS A CURE

Imagine coming out of Disneyland and finding yourself in empty or partly filled space. Well, that is how I more or less felt when I retired. All well made plans about enjoying freedom turned finally into fear of daily monotony and loneliness. Still...

In February of last year something happened to me that really turned my life around. My daughter made a surprise for me one day...

One rainy Sunday afternoon, very reserved, she took me somewhere. I understood that we were going to the "Djuro Salaj" University. We soon got to the first floor, in the Hall with mirrors. There was a small group there of different ages, sex, occupation and one charming young woman who was fidgeting around a jukebox. The secret was revealed.

My daughter brought me to a promotional class at the Dance School of the University of the Third Age. At the sign given by the young woman instructor, everyone present embraced each other and began dancing. Whether someone took me by the hand or whether I started dancing to the beautiful music, I don't know. With each new dance, rumba, waltz, rock, and with each

new move and measure my nervousness disappeared. "Reservoirs" slowly filled with positive energy. I woke up out of a dream and life once again began to flow in my veins.

That day I staid until the end of the class, and then went with my new friends to mingle at a nearby hotel. What can I say? We're still together. I no longer feel alone.

At the same University I signed up for the School of Painting and again began writing short stories. My day is filled, and I have far better relations with my family. I'm no longer just the "granny" who just cooks, washes, cleans, but an individual who has regained her self-confidence. With my peers I'm not just plodding along, but living my own life.

And one more thing. I have dreams once again. I'm more healthy. It turns out that enrollment in the Dance School is a unique sort of physical therapy. It sounds "silly", but my legs and bones don't hurt as often now.

*Slobodanka Plešinac-Boba
student of the Dance School*



SCHOOL OF DRAWING AND PAINTING

If we wanted to single out any one selection from the rich offering at the University of the Third Age, to single out something for which the University is unique and recognizable, then we would certainly have to mention the **School of Drawing and Painting**. This claim is not justified only by the fact that this program has attracted considerable attention since it was established, and the fact that over 1000 students have gone through it since, but, above all, by the fact that the program has continuously developed and expanded over the years, with new contents and activities that contributed to the promotion and affirmation of the overall work of the University of the Third Age.

Besides class work in which students discover the secrets of the

visual arts and master all painting techniques, from drawing to oil painting, under the expert guidance of mentors – academically trained artists, this program also includes the organization of painting colonies, summer art schools, series of lectures in art theory and history, as well as “Small Schools” (portraits and watercolors) and exhibitions. Also, it should not be forgotten that at the initiative of the students and instructors, the seminar “My Saint’s Day”, and later the very successful icon painters workshop, was also organized. All these activities resulted in the celebration of Saints’ Cyril and Methodius Day, as the saint’s day of the University of the Third Age, which is being celebrated since 1993.

So far fourteen **painting colonies** have been organized as part of the University of the Third Age: “Borać ‘90”, “Golubac ‘91”, “St. Prohor





Pčinjski '92", "Belgrade '93", "Seča reka '94", "Bukovička spa '95", "Igalo '96", "Đula spa '97", "Tara '98", "Lepenski vir 2000", "Ečka 2001", "Soko spa 2003" and "Ivanjica 2004". Also, in the summer of 1988, the **first art summer school** was organized in cooperation with the citizens association "Otvoreni za susede" (tr. Open for Neighbors), and successively in "Zemun 2000", "Ada Ciganlija 2001", "Široka staza 2002", "Kalemegdan 2003", "Botanička bašta 2004". The works created in the painting colonies and summer schools are exhibited in November at what has become a traditional celebration of the Day of the University of the Third Age.

Since its establishment the University of the Third Age has organized over seventy **exhibitions** of works by students of the painting program, and not just at the gallery of the "Braća Stamenković" People's

University, but also at "Galerija 34" in Valjevo, at the "Đuka Dinić" Library in Belgrade, at the Energoprojekt Art Gallery, at the "Dunjić" Gallery in Kosjerić, at the "Bežanijska kosa" Old Age Home, at the "Crnjanski" Gallery of the Đuro Salaj University, at the "Božidar Adžija" People's University, at the Manakov House, at "Galerija 73", etc. Since January 15, 1998, a competition was opened for the first independent exhibition which was won by two dozen students of the University.

What needs to be emphasized is that the works of our students have met with good reception not just among the general public, but among professional artists as well, where many of our students have won awards at amateur art competitions and have gone on to become members of various visual art clubs and artists' associations.





OPPORTUNITY FOR A NEW BEGINNING

My name is Zagorka Antonijev. I am a student at the University of the Third Age, which is part of the "Braća Stamenković" People's University. For five years now I have been enrolled in the painting program.

I was born in Belgrade in 1938. I attended high school there, but after I finished it I got married and very soon after had children. My husband was a math teacher and both my children, son Branislav and daughter Zlata, also became teachers. I also have three grandchildren



– grandson Milan, who is already at university, granddaughter Natalija who is attending a music high school and grandson Aleksa who is in first grade.

The family was and still remains a priority in my life. Until my husband passed away, I never felt that I was missing something in life. I had a beautiful marriage, filled with mutual love and understanding.

My husband passed away in 1993. Since then, nothing has been the same for me. Even though I have beautiful children who treat me very well, I felt a deep void in my heart and realized that I have to find some new meaning in life, some preoccupation to which I will devote myself. But I had no clear idea of what it could be. It continued thus until I watched a television program about the school of painting at the University of the Third Age. I realized that I wanted to learn how to paint, to try my hand at something for which I did not have time and opportunity before, and something that all these years I did not even think about.

The friendly treatment at the University of the Third Age, the pleasant and relaxed atmosphere, complete understanding for all my concerns and fears, and unreserved support from the directors of this program contributed to the feeling that I am at the right place. This



feeling became fully justified already at my first class. In a real atmosphere of painters, surrounded by people who are like me and are led by a young professor who devoted himself with boundless respect and patience to each of us, the door to a completely new world for me was opened – the world of art, education and creativity.

The invitation to take part in the Festival of Lifelong Learning in Skoplje and the organizers' decision to nominate me caused a great deal of excitement and happiness, both for myself personally, and for my family also. All my life I supported them, I helped them in everything, was happy for their every success. Since I enrolled in the University of the Third Age I have a sense that I am doing something beautiful and valuable for myself personally, and my children and wider family and friends share my joy in my every new painting, they attend all my exhibitions and provide me with maximum support.

My message to all members of my generation is that the third age can be just as beautiful as all other periods of life if we find new meaning in it and do not experience it as an ending, but as a new opportunity.

*Zagorka Antonijev
student in the painting program*

SIGN BY WHICH TO RECOGNIZE A MAN

Many people conclude their working age with a sense of having missed out on something. In search of personal salvation they always discover that it lies in the fulfillment of destiny. Everything that is created within us must venture forth into the world as an idea, a word or an action.

That is the sign by which a man is recognized. The meaning of life is to elevate the world to the state of mind through our dedication.

In the fall of 1998 I met people

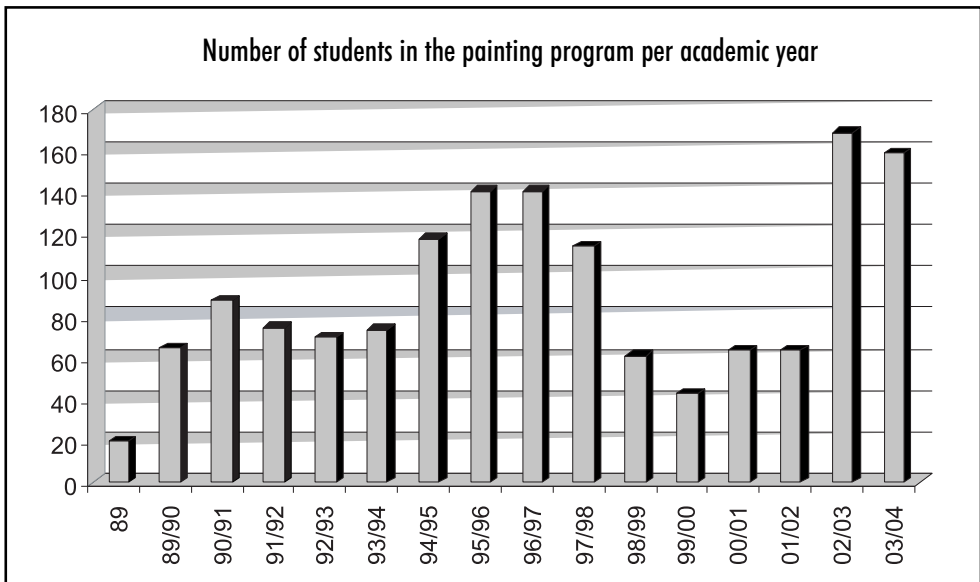




who decided, perhaps unknowingly, to make a contribution to the enlightenment of this world.

As a professor of drawing and painting at the University of the Third Age, I joined a program which had been active for many years. In spite of numerous problems and conditions for work that were far from ideal, interest was considerable. It was clear that the number of people who wanted to join, but did not dare or could not, was far greater. It was only then that I became aware of how many people battle against the drudgery of the everyday with inner light and with belief in late individuation.

There is general distrust of talent which is discovered after the age of fifty, and that is why many people unwillingly reveal their ambitions. Amateurism is a form that can provide shelter from serious artistic ambitions, always remaining between a hobby and the need for friendship. But hour upon hour spent in a studio, practicing ones will, patience and creativity slowly change the angle of perspective. And thus the reason for coming to classes ceases to be important, giving way to the process which is in progress, and that is the gradual entry into the world of one's imagination. The entire cosmos created according to one's image.





I remember the first exhibitions of the painting school in “Stamenković” as gatherings amid an atmosphere of family celebrations. The joy of creation lies in the recording of beauty, followed by its sharing with others. That is precisely what happens at these exhibitions, and hence so much joy in the people around me. Art has become a profession, and that is the reason why sincerity has long departed from galleries.

These people have no ambitions of getting far, and it is precisely because of this that they are succeeding in doing so.

Without refraining from showing emotion, not yielding to the pressures of time, they work, realizing their mission.

A truly dedicated person can capture a scene which is seemingly unimportant, such a person can give it meaning and can transform it into something valuable.

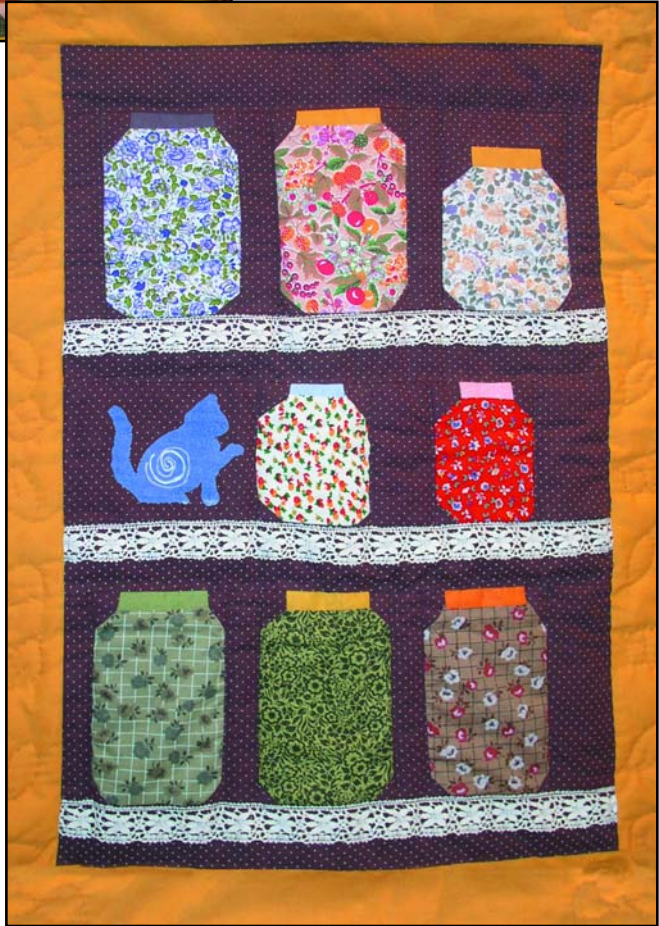
Zoran Mišić
mentor in the painting program















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