

In Memoriam Professor Dr. Mahmoud Shojai (1926-2018)

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Prof. Dr. Mahmoud Shojai, a prominent teacher of Entomology, died on 25 November 2018 at the age of 93 years. With his death, Iran lost one of its pioneers in Entomology and the Father of Biological Control of Iran.

Mahmoud Shojai was born March 16th, 1926 at Mahabad (West Azarbaijan province, Iran).

He entered the Agricultural College of Tehran University to study for Bachelor of Science in September 1947 and graduated as a top student. In January 1951, he received a Scholarship to work on the development of the PhD research in Gembloux Agricultural University, Belgium from which he graduated in 1954. He returned to his home country immediately after his graduation and started teaching in the Agricultural College of Tehran University (Karaj).

The personal experience of H. Ghahari with Dr. Shojai was brief, and took place when he was at the Tehran Islamic Azad University as a PhD student. It was my honor to attend the courses on entomophagous insects. Also, in addition to be his student, H. Ostovan, was his colleague in the Entomology Department of the Islamic Azad University for 12 years and is full of memories of him.

In addition to several papers and research projects that can not be dealt with in this brief memorial, during one century of life, Mahmoud Shojai will always be remembered by five books on entomology including some published at the age of 87 and 89 years old. During his 70 years of teaching and research activities, Mahmoud Shojai prepared and delivered many courses, the most important were : Entomology, Insect Ecology and Insect Biological Control. Nearly all present-day Iranian entomologists, have been his student somehow in at least one educational level. As a researcher, Mahmoud Shojai focused mainly on Biological Control, especially on the minute parasitoid wasps from the Trichogrammatidae family.

In our opinion and observation, the whole life and work of Mahmoud Shojai correspond to the attitude of an explorer. He was an efficient listener. People could open their heart to him and receive wise advices. He was averse to ostentation and compared to a great gentleman, who significantly affected people around him. His humour was unforgettable. Perseverance, tenacity and dedication helped Mahmoud Shojai overcome the tribulations of life. Integrity and honesty guided his actions and his work. His humanity and unquenchable interest in the biological control programs endeared him to his students and colleagues. They will not forget him. The legacy Mahmoud Shojai left behind during a life of passionate research is the light shed on many entomological problems which would have remained unknown, had not his restless spirit brought them to the awareness of his followers.

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