

## JELENA LONČARIĆ, physicist

Jelena Lončarić was a professional editor for physics for 16 years, and for the previous two years she has been the editor-in-chief of Školska knjiga. What her path was from experimental physics to book editing, what she does and what her further plans are, she will reveal to us in the next conversation.

*You graduated in experimental physics at the Department of Physics, Faculty of Science in Zagreb. You probably didn't even dream then that the road would take you in the direction of editing books. How did that come about?*

At the time I was enrolling in college and thinking less about what profession I would pursue after it, and more guided by the idea of what really interested me. I enrolled in experimental physics because physics fascinated me and I thought I would make a big mistake in life if I didn't take the opportunity to find out how the universe is organized, what natural laws determine it, and what limits human knowledge of it has reached. After college, I worked as a research novice at the University of Zagreb and in parallel wrote texts for the scientific and educational program of HRT. At the time, the legendary physics editor at Školska knjiga, Mrs. Branimira Valić was retiring and I thought how wonderful it would be to inherit her job in which I can reconcile my love of physics and books. That was 18 years ago, and even today I think this professional choice is completely in line with my personality.

*How many editions are behind you? Which is your favorite?*

In a wide range of several hundred editions that came out of the physics department, from editions for preschool and school age children to school and university textbooks and professional manuals, I might still single out popular science editions intended for a wide range of readers. It would be unfair to single out and say that it is my favorite for an edition, because I treat every book with equal love and attention. My heart is always drawn to recently published editions, so I would definitely point out the Peculiarities of Richard Feynman's Physical Laws and the biography of Einstein's greatest delusion of David Bodanis. I am currently looking forward to the release of a book on women scientists Women in Science - 50 Fearless Leaders Who Changed the World, highlighting the contributions of fifty notable women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics from ancient times to modern times. I am glad that today more and more girls decide to work in the STEM field and that their representation in the scientific world is growing. I believe that women have an exceptional skill that was nicely summed up by American primatologist Jane Goodall: "We can only realize our own potential if our clear minds and hearts work together."

*You have recently held the position of Editor-in-Chief. Explain to us what the job of the editor-in-chief of a large publishing house is.*

Školska knjiga has been a recognizable trademark of Croatian publishing for 70 years and nurtures the tradition of creating reliable literature. The job of the editor-in-chief is to gather together with her team consisting of an orchestra of twenty excellent editors in the School Book, to gather the most distinguished author teams from science, education and culture to jointly design and implement a publishing program that meets the challenges of the third millennium. achievements in education. It is certainly important that we all nurture the Croatian language and national and cultural values.

*Is textbook editing different from editing professional or popular editions? What is important when editing textbooks?*

Textbook editing differs from editing any other type of edition in terms of professional complexity and layered approach. Textbooks also have many formal requirements that need to be taken into account when creating them, they need to reconcile many professional, methodological, pedagogical and graphic requirements, so it is logical that a larger team of authors work on them at the same time. The editor is there to reconcile all these requirements and to harmonize their work so that every student who is the end user of that textbook set has a complete literature from which to learn and develop the necessary competencies.



My personal mission is that each textbook has the potential to arouse students' love for the subject and to encourage them to look for other literature with which they will further deepen their knowledge. Editing a textbook carries a much greater responsibility, because it is the most relevant literature for students from which they learn and on which the construction of all their future knowledge and learning is based. I find Školska knjiga has outstanding textbooks, thanks to a whole team of experts who rethink and shape them and I have to say that it fills me with special pride.

Popular-scientific publications, on the other hand, bear the personal stamp of one author and his way of experiencing and presenting science, and when editing, care should be taken that the author's idea is realized in the best possible way.

*If you weren't an editor, what would you do?*

Probably the expected answer would be that she would like to be a scientist in some lab, but that would not be true. It would be nice to help people in a hospital in the field of medical physics that I focused on in my last year of college or somewhere to have the opportunity to awaken in children a love of science, but the latter I already have the opportunity to do.

*What do you do in your free time?*

I spend my free time with family and friends, and we like to spend some free days without school obligations on a trip in nature or a trip. I have no special hobbies, except for cooking, which is not only my daily obligation but also a good way to relax and express another kind of creativity.

*What do you read when you read for yourself?*

Reading fills me, relaxes and makes me happy. When choosing a title or author, I rely on my intuition, which usually leads me to works that carry the atmosphere of a time more than they rely on a dynamic plot. I love works in which universal human dilemmas are found in the context of time and the individual and whose influence continues on me and much later than the closing of the cover. I am very lucky in life that my profession allows me to read books that I would otherwise read in my life.

*Which physicist do you like to work with?*

I work with a number of exceptional Croatian physicists every day, and if I have to point out someone, it is a great honor and pleasure to have the opportunity to work with academician Vladimir Paar, who I believe has made a great contribution through his scientific work. I have edited editions that made many children love physics and opted for a lifelong vocation in the natural sciences.

*If you could travel to the past, which physics experiment would you like to take part in?*

Every discovery in the field of fundamental science is exciting, and the history of science abounds with fantastic scientific discoveries that sooner or later change the lives of all people on earth. Often times, physical discoveries are difficult to approach someone who does not immediately see their application and are therefore less known to the public. Great discoveries are usually preceded by hard experimental work. If I had to point out an experiment or discovery that changed the image of the Earth forever, and in which I wish I could participate, then it would be Nikola Tesla's experiments that resulted in top discoveries and inventions that changed the image of the world forever.

*Did you show an interest in science as a child or did it come during your schooling?*

As a child, I was first very interested in mathematics. Unfortunately, physics is only taught from the 7th grade of elementary school and until then I enjoyed solving problem math problems. My love for physics was born thanks to the good and inspiring physics teachers I had in elementary and high school.

*You also edit editions for children and young people. How to recognize and develop a love of science in children and youth?*

The best way to get children and young people interested in science is to answer the questions they ask at an early age about the world around them. Children should be offered content that stimulates curiosity, imagination and thinking, and asked to make their own assumptions about how the world works. Teachers and books can encourage them to explore and reflect on the world around them, and parents can support them in doing so.