

## PERSONALITIES FROM THE MERIDIANS OF THE ENGINEERING UNIVERSE



**Silviu Pușcașu** was born in Craiova on the 10th of May 1927, which was the National day of Romania at that time, exactly during the military parade. He was the only child of a family made up of two primary school teachers. His father, Marin Pușcașu, was a primary school teacher at “*Ion Eliade*

” School from Craiova. Perfect educator, proving a total moral integrity, he became the director of this school. His mother, the primary school teacher Eliza Pușcașu, born Schindler, was passionate of painting and piano. He even played at the organ of the Catholic Church from Craiova.

Between 1934 and 1938 he attended the primary school at “*Ion Eliade Rădulescu*” school, under his parents’ careful supervision, and then, after a difficult entrance examination, he was admitted in the secondary school at “*Frați Buzesti*” High school from Craiova, which he graduated in 1946. In the same year he passed the entrance examination at the Faculty of Electromechanics of Timisoara. There were 400 candidates and he managed to pass the entrance examination in the second position, distinguishing himself from the very beginning. The energy sector of economy was growing very fast, so, realizing the role that Oltenia would play in the energetic sector, he chose “*The Transport and the Distribution of Electric Energy*” specialization.

**First Steps in Academic System.** In 1950 he got his engineer diploma and he was sent to comply with his time of probation at the Regional Company for Electricity of Stalin Town which used to be the former name of Brasov. He worked for a short period of time for the Regional Company for Electricity from Sibiu, and in December 1950 he was employed as an assistant to the Faculty of Mechanization of Agriculture which was part of The Agronomic Institute of Craiova, founded only three years before according to the *Law no. 138 regarding the setting up and organizing the University of Craiova*, voted by the Depute

Assembly on the 5th of April 1947 and signed by King Michael I on the 21st of April 1947.

Starting with May 1951 he became a lecturer. During those years, the economic priority was the electrification. The electrification of industry, the electrification of agriculture, the electrification of transportation means. Taking these conditions into account, in 1951 it was set up at Craiova The Institute of Electrical Machines and Equipment which included the Faculty of Electrotechniques, and, then, from 1953 also the Faculty of Electrification of Industry, Agriculture and Transports. In these conditions, the professional evolution of Silviu Pușcașu met the requirements of engineering educational system of Craiova. As a result, from September 1952 until 1958 he worked as a lecturer within this institute.

**Radio Amateur and Excursionist.** During the ’50s the wireless activity and electronics developed in Romania. Silviu Pușcașu, fan of electronics, became also a wireless fan, so, in 1958 he got a transmitter diploma, 3<sup>rd</sup> category. As a radio amateur, he had the YO7 – 136 indicative. His passion for electronics and radio led his professional career towards the Radio Studio of Craiova where he was engineer-in-chief for a while and where he was a collaborator for a long period of time. In September 1958, The Institute of Electrical Equipment ceased its activity, and professor Silviu Pușcașu was transferred with his academic activity to the Polytechniques Institute of Timișoara, but his family remained in Craiova, so, for two years, until 1960, he commuted weekly between Craiova and Timișoara. During these two years, he had a lot of friends at Timișoara. One of them was Professor Eugen Seracin, a passionate alpinist, with whom he traveled through all the Romanian mountains, and then his son, Dan Pușcașu. I remember that, many years later, in 82-83 I went with him to the Teaching Station from Rânca. He was normally a communicative man, but that time he was really exuberant. The memories might have made him to be so.

**Professor at the Pedagogical Institute.** In 1960 the Pedagogical Institute was set up at Craiova, so he came back in this town. The experience he accumulated over these years, but also his qualities asserted him through his colleagues from Craiova, As a result, for five years,

between 1963 and 1968 he was the head of the Department of Electrotechniques and Industrial Knowledge within the Pedagogical Institute. In parallel he also held the position of Dean of The Faculty of Physics and Chemistry (March 1963-March 1964) and pro-rector of The Pedagogical Institute (March 1964 - September 1966).

**University of Craiova Stage.** Meanwhile the University of Craiova was set up, and Silviu Puşcaşu becomes an assistant professor in 1966. He was one of the first pro-rectors for two years, from September 1966 to March 1968. Then, for 12 years, from September 1968 to September 1980, he was the head of the Department of Electrotechniques Basics, transformed in the Department of Electromechanics by unifying the Department of Machines, Equipment and Electrical Drives. This became a huge department and I belonged to this department starting with 1980. I remember the scientific debates, but also Silviu Puşcaşu's tactful method to direct us to a creative goal. He was studying cryogenics or, better said, of electrotechniques at very low temperatures. Even now, at Craiova, his disciples continue this activity. During that time, he was also involved in promoting industrial property, namely inventions and not only.

In 1970 he defended his Ph.D. thesis at the Polytechnics Institute of Timișoara. The subject was "Contributions to the behaviour of fluorescent tubes supplied with variable frequency". He got his Ph.D. Diploma in Engineering on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 1971. Ten years later, in March 1981, Professor Silviu Puşcaşu participated to the defence of my Ph.D. thesis as a member of the Commission of Analysis. I can still remember the elegance of his paper and his rhetoric manner of speaking. My mother who assisted to my Ph.D. defence didn't have the necessary knowledge for understanding the subject of my thesis. She judged only the formal parts of the ceremony and at the end she told me "*My son, anyone can see that he is a great professor!*" referring to Silviu Puşcaşu!"

**Rector of University of Craiova.** From May 1981 until October 1984 he was Rector of University of Craiova. During that period he did a lot of things. I have to say that he supported me to bring in 1982 a M18 computer manufactured in Bucharest. This computer was necessary for the course "*The Use of Computers in Electrical Drives*". During that time there was only one computer in faculty, at the Computer Department. Many people were involved in this purchase, but as a Rector, he approved to set up a lab for Electrical

Drives in two very modern rooms. These rooms still exist and they are used for students to learn about computers. With this computer some of my colleagues finished their Ph.D. thesis, others learnt the first things. As a Rector, he also supported the practical stages for the students of University of Craiova. I remember the interest he had in studying the students' practical achievements, looking for innovative products for the Production Workshop of the Faculty of Electrotechnics. After 1984 he came back to the Faculty of Electrotechniques as a head of the Department of Electrotechnics and Electromechanics until 1990. During that year many radical changes occurred, but he remained the same. He wrote two reference books: "Modern Springs of Light", published at the Scientific Publishing House in 1968 and "*Sizes and Non-Sinusoidal Electrical Regimes*", Scrisul Romanesc Publishing House in 1974. He also wrote over 120 scientific papers published in Romania and abroad and he was member of numerous scientific research contracts.

**Canada – a one way direction.** He totally gave up his teaching career in 2000. I wonder if he withdrew because the changes after 1990 were difficult or because he wanted to move to Canada in order to be with his son Dan and his grandchildren, Vlad and Anca Maria. It was surely difficult for him to be apart from Craiova and Romania. He left Craiova once, in 1958, but he came back.

This time he didn't. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2007, 22,30 local time, his soul flew through air, probably to Craiova, over the Romanian mountains, maybe accompanied by YO7 – 136 indicative.

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