



PROF. GALUN: THE VILLAGE GIRL WHO BROUGHT TOP ISRAELI ENTOMOLOGICAL SCIENCE TO AFRICA AND SAVED MILLIONS

"Blessed are those whose relations include the adjectives; Teacher-student, friends, and family members."

Only a few (if any) were privileged to have the Israeli Entomological Society honoring them by dedicating its annual meeting to their work. But that is precisely what happened to Prof. Rachel Galun on her 90th birthday in 2017.

This is a good enough sign that Prof. Galun was a giant as a person and as a world-appreciated scientist.

Other "clear signs" of Prof. Galun's greatness include:

* **Being** the 19th and 20th President of the International Congress of Entomology (in China and Italy).

* **Helped** to establish ICIPE (International Center of Insect Physiology & Ecology) as a leading African research institute.

* **Contributed** to decreasing the Tsetse fly on the African economy and health.

* **Published** 20 articles in Nature and Science, etc.

This week, April 17, 2023, at the age of 97, Professor Rachel Galun passed away.

PERSPECTIVE

Prof. Galun said that hominids existed only 2 million years versus insects that appeared 400 million years ago and will remain long after we no longer inhabit Earth. Hence, we should respect insects and learn to live with them.

Growing up in a family of farmers from a young age, Prof. Galun loved and respected insects and nature.

Though she grew up when a woman was much more limited than today, she never conformed to conventions. When those didn't suit her, she found a way to do what she wanted and loved by introducing a different perspective to the event.

AFRICA

When I think of Africa (and Asia), I think of the enormous unfulfilled potential.

Prof. Thomas Risley Odhiambo thought so too. As a result, in 1970, he founded *The International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology* ([ICIPE](#)) in Nairobi, Kenya.

Israel was one of 10 contributing founders of *ICIPE*, and as such, Prof. Rachel Galun became part of the founders of this esteemed institute.

When Prof. Galun first arrived at *ICIPE*, it had only one researcher: a chemist.

This was the first trip, followed by many more in the coming years after Prof. Galun was appointed as a *Visiting Director of Research at ICIPE* (1971 to 1979).



Prof. Odhiambo and Prof. Galun (at the center)

Later on, Prof. Galun was elected to the *International Committee* (1975) and the *Governing Board* (1979) of *ICIPE*.

Prof. Galun has kept her contact with the institute for 25 years!

The great work of the founders is well noted until this day. Nearly 50 years later, *ICIPE* is a well-known success story and a leading worldwide scientific excellence and training center in Africa.



Founder and Director, Prof. Odhiambo (yellow arrow), with Prof. Galun to his right and colleagues. How many women do you count in the picture?

As a representative of the Israeli National Academy of Sciences, Prof. Galun's African activity extended beyond *ICIPE* and Kenya to Tanzania, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Egypt, Madagascar, and Mauritius.

Her studies in those countries were in Medical Entomology and focused on sucking-blood insects relevant to pests in Africa, i.e., ticks, the Tsetse fly, and mosquitoes (mainly *Aedes aegypti*).

African readers would like to know that thanks to Prof. Galun's work, the Tsetse fly is no longer a significant cause of fear and a threat to farmers' lives and livestock in large parts of Africa.

If you want to know why you should study entomology, then know this, Prof. Galun's entomological work saved the lives of thousands, maybe millions. Do you want too to save the lives of millions?

RETIREMENT

After retirement Prof. Galun remained active, giving lectures, participating in scientific meetings, and more.

My scientific acquaintance with Prof. Galun began when working on professional agrotech challenges, trying to improve fruit flies attractants developed by Biofeed (a company I founded and managed).

This brought me to read Prof. Galun's articles on semiochemicals. Her articles gave me insights into one of the biggest mysteries in entomology: insects' communication through smells.

Thanks to those articles, I understood the problem better and could figure out the path to the solution.



At my 50 birthday with Prof. Galun.

I was lucky to have Prof. Rachel as my Professor during my Ph.D. study, though she had already retired when we first met.

Twenty-two years have passed since I met Prof. Galun and 19 years since I completed my Ph.D.

In those years, I made Prof. Galun part of the Biofeed BOD team, part of my family (my children knew her as Grandma Rachel), and a person I could meet anytime and consult about issues no one else understood other than her. She was the voice of reason and endless empathy.

But above all, I see Rachel as a friend whose vision and hopes were parallel to those of mine in many topics.



Rachel with my wife and children (2006). She always had at home sweets for children.

RACHEL

Rachel, you passed away at home, surrounded by your family and people who loved you, and you loved them.

You blessed the world with your work, passion, and love, and the world blessed you in return.

You will keep living in our minds and thoughts, in the science that students will keep learning and professors will teach, in practical applications where entrepreneurs and industries put to use your scientific findings, and in the hearts of those you touched.

I end this column with the words of Prof. Odhiambo, which refers to ICIPE, an institute Prof. Galun cared about dearly.

"The idea was actually very simple, get the very best people and then if you have more money, put buildings and equipment around them."

Prof. Odhiambo searched for the "very best people," and the universe sent him Prof. Rachel Galun.

* Please share the column with friends/colleagues, and share your insights with me.

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**** Mental and Economic Freedom Are Interconnected ****

See you soon,

Nimrod



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P.S.

If you missed it, here is a link to last week's blog, "[Why A Broad Perspective Characterizes Successful Leaders, And Why Must You Broaden Yours.](#)"

Link to [recent columns.](#)

P.P.S. LINKS

ENGLISH LINKS

- [A tribute to Prof. Rachel Galun, who passed away today \(April 17, 2023\)](#)
- [Afternoon talk with Prof. Rachel Gallon about Mosquitoes](#)

HEBREW LINKS

- [עם פרופ' רחל גלון על זבובי פירות \(ועוד\)](#)
- [רחל גלון – הוועידה לאנטומולוגיה 2017 – קורות חיים](#)
- [וויקיפדיה](#)
- [נמרוד ישראלי, הספד לרחל גלון \(18.4.2023\)](#)

***Change Begins With A Decision
That The Existing Reality Is A Choice
And Not A Decree of Fate***