



IN MEMORY OF Professor Zbigniew Kowalski, M.D., Ph.D. 1922–2001

On 7 December 2001, in Aleksandrów/Łódź, a group of closed friends, present and former employees of the Nofer Institute of Occupational Medicine were bidding farewell to Professor Zbigniew Kowalski, taking him to his last resting place and recalling his exceptional dedication to work, as well as to the development and prosperity of the Institute.

Professor Kowalski with his profound professional knowledge and experience was one of the most active member of the Institute's managerial staff, very well oriented in the operational mechanisms of the Institute. His personality, diligence and immense erudition had contributed greatly to the successful development of his professional career. He was a great man and an excellent teacher who knew how to inspire his disciples and co-workers with his own enthusiasm. His performance should be an example to all of us.

Professor Kowalski was born on 21 September 1922 in Łódź. Under Nazi occupation, Zbigniew and his parents were displaced from Łódź and lived in a small village Podolin. In 1942 he was put to the Radogoszcz camp in Łódź and then to prison in Łęczyca. Just after the war he resumed his secondary education. In 1946 he was awarded a secondary school certificate. During the same year he began his studies at the Faculty of Medicine, Łódź University, and completed them in 1952. During his stud-

ies he was active in the students' circle and finally he was appointed a deputy chairman of the circle of medical students and held this position for three years. As a student of the fourth year, he began to work in the Medical Academy Outpatient Clinic of Occupational Medicine in Łódź, and then in the Department of Work Hygiene of the State Institute of Hygiene in Warsaw, located in Łódź. In 1952, he was granted a doctoral scholarship. Because of death of his promoter, Professor E. Paluch, the defense of his doctor's dissertation on "The development of silicosis in white rats exposed to repeated intratracheal administration of quartz dust suspension", was delayed until December 1960 when he earned his M.D. degree. Meantime he participated in training courses on hygiene concentrating his interest on work hygiene. In 1968 he became a 2nd grade specialist in work hygiene.

In 1956 he joined the staff of the Institute of Occupational Medicine in Łódź. He was continuously involved in research, mainly in the evaluation of occupational exposure to chemicals and the exposure evaluation methods. He benefited from numerous scholarships and study tours abroad expanding his knowledge in this field. In 1986 he was granted a 2nd grade specialization in toxicology.

Professor Kowalski found himself in a group of scholars recognized as fathers of experimental toxicology in Poland. Under his supervision, the laboratory and then

the Department of Industrial Toxicology were established in the Institute. This Department was a cradle of consecutive research units. His own output was devoted mainly to experimental toxicology. Many of his publications presented original findings of experimental studies. Some of them proved to be of paramount importance for health protection of working people. One of his accomplishments of historical significance in this area was the resolution of the problem concerning occupational exposure to toxic volatile oils.

Working in the Institute he advanced through several stages, from the head of the Laboratory of Experimental Toxicology, and the head of the Section of Scientific Documentation and Information, to the position of the Deputy Director for Basic Scientific Work, taken in January 1978 and held until his retirement in 1990.

In 1989, the Minister of Health and Social Welfare granted him the position of professor.

Professor Kowalski was a member of numerous scientific societies, e.g. the Polish Association of Occupational Medicine, the Polish Association of Pharmacology and the Polish Hygiene Association. He was also a member of the Permanent Commission of the International Society of Occupational Medicine.

He was awarded many distinctions for his professional and social activities, e.g. the Cavalier's Cross of the Order of the Rebirth of Poland, the Silver Cross of Merit and the Medal for "excellent work in health service".

In 1955 Professor Kowalski was appointed the Secretary of the Editorial Board of a bimonthly *Medycyna Pracy*, becoming later its Editor-in-Chief and holding this position until 1999. During this period he was very much involved in the development of this journal, the advancement in its scientific standard and making it useful for industrial (now occupational) medicine physicians. Under

his leadership, the journal developed gaining the recognition among publishers and readers, being a valuable source of information also for other researchers interested in this area of knowledge.

Professor Kowalski was the author and co-author of over 90 scholarly works, including original, review and methodological papers, as well as of a number of textbooks. His papers were published in Polish and foreign journals, also in the *Medycyna Pracy* and the *International Journal of Occupational Medicine and Environmental Health*. The majority of his works were devoted to industrial toxicology and work hygiene, but he also published articles on the role and tasks of occupational medicine. Among his text-books, a monograph entitled "An analysis of work arduousness" deserves a special mention. A chapter on the hygiene evaluation of the work environment, the first Polish publication devoted to this subject, appeared to be the essence of work hygiene. His scholarly works were characterized by profound knowledge of all problems and issues occurring in the field of work hygiene and toxicology.

During the years 1988-2000 he was one of the leading members of the Editorial Board of the *International Journal of Occupational Medicine and Environmental Health*, acting as a Deputy Editor (1988-1989), Co-editor (1990-1998) and finally as a member of the Polish Contributing Editors.

We lost a noble man of great heart. He will be truly missed by his friends and all those who had the pleasure to work with him. His name and accomplishments will remain etched in our memories.

Editorial Board

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