

Obituary



PROFESSOR DOCTOR STANISŁAW UZIAK (1926-2011)

We are grief-stricken to report on the loss of Professor Doctor Habilitated Stanisław Uziak who died on 17th of February 2011. He was the Editor-in-Chief of the Polish Journal of Soil Science since 1988, who co-founded the journal with Professor Bohdan Dobrzański in 1968.

Our Master and Teacher passed away, a man gifted with eminent personality, unceasingly cheerful and kind-hearted. Extensive knowledge and ability to perceive truly vital and significant matters as well as the ability to establish human relations easily won the favour, respect and fellowship of those who knew Him. He forsook his students and colleagues who will remember Him as the outstanding Scholar, learned Teacher and a reliable Friend.

Professor Stanisław Uziak was born on 27th of February 1926 in the Village of Wola Suchożebrska (the District of Siedlce). He attended the primary school in Pruszyń and the secondary school - in Siedlce within the framework of secret teaching during the World War II. He was a student at the Faculty of Agriculture at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (UMCS) in the years from 1944 until 1948 (was awarded the Master's Degree in 1949). He was awarded the Doctor's Degree (PhD, within the framework of the former advanced education system at that time doctorate was referred to as candidate of science) at UMCS in 1954, and was habilitated with the postdoctoral degree by the Agricultural University in Lublin in 1964. In 1973 he earned the title of extraordinary professorship, and in 1980 - the title of ordinary professor.

Throughout his professional career Professor Stanisław Uziak was engaged with Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, holding the positions: deputy assistant (since 1946), junior assistant (1947), senior assistant (1949), assistant

professor (1953), associate professor (1964) and professor (1973). Notwithstanding the fact that he retired in 1996, He was strongly involved in development of the Institute of Earth Sciences for years, succeeding in funds raising for extension of a new facility for the Institute. He had been engaged with the Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences since 1958. He had held the position of the Vice Dean (1966-1972), and in the years 1981-1984 He had been the Dean for the Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences. In the years 1984-1987 He had been elected for the position of the Rector for UMCS. For 31 years (1965-1996) He had been the Head of the Soil Science Department at that Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences.

Professor Stanisław Uziak was a renowned and esteemed expert on soil science and soil geography. His research mainly concerned the genesis, classification and soil cartography, clay mineral content and the influence of antropopression upon soil, and soil protection. He left a considerable research output of 145 works, including 5 textbooks and 1 academic handbook. The research deliverables were presented at congresses or national and foreign symposia, *inter alia* in Beijing (1993), Acapulco (Mexico - 1994), Montpellier (France -1998). Some of his research output-based works were published in foreign scientific journals on the "ISI Master Journal List". His works represented the application approach to a lesser or greater extent e.g., the research on soil in the Eastern Poland with a particular focus on heavy metals content. He was a promotor for three doctoral degrees and two postdoctoral degrees.

He also held prominent positions in the Polish research organisations. Since 1959 he had been a member of the Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN), and in the years 1990-1993 he had held the position of the Committee Chairperson. He had been actively engaged in the operations of scientific societies - Polish Soil Science Society (PTG), for many years He had been a member and a chairperson of the Management Board of the Society's Branch Office in the Lubelskie Region, and had also been the Vice President of the PTG Executive Board (1988-1991). Since 1954 he had been a member of the Polish Geographic Society, and since 1959 he had been the member of the International Union of Soil Science (IUSS).

Professor Stanisław Uziak was honoured with the Silver and Golden Order of Merit, the Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta and was conferred upon with the Teacher of Merit Award of the Republic of Poland. Many a time was He honoured with the prizes of the Minister of Higher Education and scientific prizes of the Secretary of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Exceptional creative activity of the Professor was not limited strictly to science. The Professor had begun to write on contemporary issues regarding the University, the City of Lublin, social-and-political issues, including those connected with the accession of Poland to the European Union. Numerous articles

were devoted to his relatives, late fellows and friends. He published them mainly in UMCS's "University News". However, the Professor's memoirs published in 2 volumes on 600 pages deserve special attention. The work titled: "Half a Century at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University", published by UMCS, in 2001. In the first volume He described not only his scientific career path but also the history of many persons related to the higher education, the history of a few of the departments and faculties of UMCS, as well as other higher education collages. The Professor elaborated especially upon his professional engagement (the years of 1984 -1987), when He held the position of the Rector of UMCS. The second volume (366 pages) is a very interestingly written all-over-the-world travel memoirs (except for Antarctica). As he had admitted himself, that He had let himself indulge in travelling, as though He had no geographical background, He had had a travelling geographer's soul.

One cannot fail to mention the Professor's great commitment, including successful considerable funds raising firstly for the purpose of adapting the "post military" buildings and secondly for the purpose of constructing a new building for the Faculty of Earth Science and Spatial Management of UMCS. That was how Professor Stanisław Uziak's retirement "was like".

Professor was known for his diligence. In his scientific research and publications He focused on quality rather than quantity. He was the opponent of "dissolution" of contents, explicitly preferring economical and at the same time transparent and clear style of writing. He was highly esteemed and respected, thus He was often requested for opinions and recommendations in the case of scientific promotions (awards of postdoctoral degrees, professorship).

He was sensitive to the beauty of creation, marvelled at the landscape of Poland and the whole world, watched migration of birds, in Spring he went out of Lublin to listen to larks singing. He was gifted for music himself, played the piano and sang nicely. He liked the company of his fellow-workers and was always extremely alert about a variety of occasional meetings. He indeed engaged himself in those activities till the very end of his days. He bestowed good-heartedness and great benevolence on us. He was not deprived of a good sense of humour, which was the source of sheer joy for those who met Him. We shall remember Him such a Person.

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