

*Obituary*



PROFESSOR DOCTOR HENRYK DOMŻAŁ (1938–2014)

On March 19, 2014, we received sad news of the passing of a distinguished scholar, one of the founders of the Lublin School of Soil Physics – Prof. Dr. Henryk Domżał. It was a difficult fact to accept for me personally, the employees of the Institute of Soil Science and Environment Management of the Agrobioengineering Faculty, as well as the entire community of the University of Life Sciences (former Agricultural University) in Lublin.

I had the pleasure of working with Prof. Domżał for almost 50 years. He was not only a great scholar, a leader among soil scientists from Poland and across the world, but also a very warm and sincere person, a good friend, an excellent Director of the Institute of Soil Science and Environment Management (1992–2008), who cared for the scientific development of the cadre of the Institute, its technological equipment base, highest standards of its educational curriculum, as well as the effectiveness in acquiring resources for scientific research.

Professor Henryk Domżał was born on January 3, 1938 in Starościce in the Lublin Province, Poland. He completed his higher education in 1962 in the Faculty of Agriculture of the Agricultural University in Lublin. His professional and scholarly career was associated with the Institute of Soil Science and Environment Management of the Agrobioengineering Faculty of the University of Life Sciences in Lublin. His work at the Institute began in 1961, when he was a fifth-year student of the Faculty of Agriculture of the Agricultural University. In 1962, he received an Engineering Master's Degree in Agriculture and began his employment as an assistant in the Institute of Soil Science of the Faculty

of Agriculture of the Agricultural University in Lublin. Innovative concepts of evaluating the physical state and development of the water-air properties of sandy soils and rendzinas became an inspiration for further research in the direction of the world trend for eco-development and global protection of soils. They concerned, among others, the impact of cultivation on the properties and morphology of soils, transformations of the soil environment under the influence of diverse human activity, as well as validity of the complex evaluation of optimal conditions for favorable soil structure formations. The consequence of this research was subsequent stages of the scholarly career of Prof. Domżał. In 1970, he received a PhD in agricultural studies and was advanced to the adjunct position. His dissertation committee chair was Prof. Bohdan Dobrzański and the title of the dissertation was “The impact of humidity on the agrophysical properties of rendzina soils derived from chalk rocks of the Lublin Upland.” In 1978, he received a habilitated doctor degree (DSc) in agronomy with a specialization in soil science based on his scholarly achievements, as well as the habilitation thesis entitled “Density and its role in the formation of the water-air properties of soils.” He was then advanced to the position of docent. In 1986, he received the academic title of university professor of agriculture. In 1995, he received the nomination for the position of ordinary professor. In the years 1984–1990, which marked a difficult period of political and economic transformations in Poland, Prof. Henryk Domżał served as the Prorector of the Agricultural Academy in Lublin. His service was stellar, both with regard to the demands of that period of time and in terms of the long-term perspective. From 1992 through 2008, which was the year of Prof. Domżał’s retirement, he served as the Chair of the Institute of Soil Science and Environment Management. He contributed substantially to the sustainable development of the Institute. He was also the representative of the Council of the Faculty of Agriculture in the Senate of the University Life Sciences in Lublin (1993–2008) and the Chair of the following Senate Committees: Work Safety and Hygiene; Research; University Organization and Development.

In appreciation of the scientific circles in Poland and world-wide, Prof. Domżał was selected for various functions beyond his Alma Mater. He was a member of the Ukrainian Academy of Agricultural Studies (1992–2002), vice-president of the Agrophysics Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences, vice-president (1991–1994) and president (1994–1997) of the International Soil Tillage Research Organization (ISTRO), member of the Lublin Scientific Society, member of the Polish and International Soil Science Societies, as well as many other scientific societies and organizations.

Prof. Domżał’s activity contributed significantly to the promotion of the Institute of Soil Science and Environment Management, the Faculty of Agrobiotechnology and the University of Life Sciences in Lublin both nationally and world-wide. It also facilitated the development of a wide international scientific cooperation.

Prof. Domżał's scientific record includes: 270 publications; 8 books, scripts and textbooks; 1 monograph; chairing 3 doctoral dissertations and over 60 Master's Theses. He propagated soil science in scientific research and teaching through organizing international congresses, conferences, courses, seminars and field trainings. He believed that an important role of such meetings was not only didactic but also related to the exchange of scientific thought and integration of the soil science communities. Due to his dedication and empathy, he developed many friendships in Poland and abroad.

For his achievements in teaching, research and service and for his merit in science, he was honored with numerous awards, including: the Silver Cross of Merit; the Gold Cross of Merit; the Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta; the Medal of the National Education Committee; the Gold Crest of the Polish Society of Soil Science.

We bid farewell to a Man who was exceptionally humble, a great scholar and a tutor of many generations of scientists who continue the work of their Master.

*Prof. Dr. Stanisław Baran*