

Professor Stanisław Wróbel (1946–2013)



On 13th September 2013, after long lasting incurable disease, Stanisław Wróbel left us. He was a full Professor of Physics, Head of the Department of the Advanced Materials Engineering at the Institute of Physics of the Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland. For the liquid crystal community his name is immediately recognized due to his research activities, especially in the field of Ferroelectric Liquid Crystals as studied by dielectric spectroscopy and complementary methods. For many colleagues and pupils Stan was a gentle friend, a skilful and diligent scientist, an excellent lecturer, and a deeply engaged academic teacher. His family lost loving husband, father of two daughters and two sons, and grandfather.

Professor Wróbel was born on 17th July 1946 at Brzozowa. The studies of physics (1965–1970) and whole professional life was connected with the Jagiellonian University. At the end of studies he joined the “Molecular crystals and liquid crystals group” headed by Prof. Jerzy A. Janik. The Master (1970) and Ph.D. (1974) theses were devoted to studies of the dielectric properties of the well known *p*-azoxyanizole (PA) in the radio and microwave frequency ranges.

Then, the research program was extended to other members of the PA homologous series which has been summarized in the habilitation thesis (1987). In 1996 he became appointed as a Professor (2008 — full Professor).

He was promoter of dozens of master and five doctoral theses. For the achievements in the research and didactic activities Stanisław Wróbel was several times awarded by the Rector of the Jagiellonian University.

Prof. S. Wróbel was very good organizer and creator of the scientific life. In the Institute of Physics, Jagiellonian University, he established a well equipped laboratory for studies of phase transitions and dynamical properties in molecular systems (liquid crystals, molecular crystals, ionic complexes, ferroelectric alloys). Nine grants founded by the central Polish institutions were successfully realized by his team. He organized many international scientific workshops and conferences, especially his role as co-organizing chairman of the 23th ILCC in 2010 at Cracow and the chairman of the XL Meeting of the Polish Physical Society (Cracow 2009), has to be emphasized. He was an active member of the Polish Physical Society (in the periods 2002–2005 and 2008–2009 he served as Chairman of the Cracow Division), and the Polish and International Liquid Crystal Societies. He was the member of the Editorial Board of *Liquid Crystals*.

Professor Wróbel was an experimental physicist. The work with apparatus was his fascination and pleasure. He always explained to students or young co-workers that the time spending on a perfect preparation of an experiment was never lost: badly prepared experiments result in losing costly sample and huge of time. He was also pedantic in evaluation of the data. Discussions of the results on seminars had to be deep and versatile — he did not accept a shallow treatment of the subject.

Scientific activity of Stanisław Wróbel was closely connected with several research groups abroad and in Poland. He spent one year (09.1979–09.1980) at the Kent State University (W. Doane group), and was a well seen visiting scientist at several universities, in part repeatedly, for instance in Halle (H. Sackmann and D. Demus group, since 1977), in Uppsala (B. Gestblom group, since 1986), in Darmstadt (W. Haase group, since 1988), and Calais (C. Legrand group, since 2001). His scientific achievements can be formally summarized as follows: author or co-author of over 150 papers and review articles published in peer reviewed journals, co-editor (with W. Haase) of the monograph *Relaxation Phenomena* (Springer 2003), two series of conference proceedings (*Mol. Cryst. Liq. Cryst.* 1990 and 2011), and co-author of several text-books.

Summarizing, his scientific achievements are more technical, not encompassing the person behind. Stan was from a throughout humanistic background, always helpful minded, through his compensating personality he could unify diverse aspects very easily. His strength came from his family. He made effort to spend as much time as possible in mountains with family members and friends as an experienced tourist. On February this year he had one of his last excursions together with his wife Urszula to Sinai/Egypt as a memory trip tracing their youngest daughter Maria who deceased unexpectedly there in July 2011.

The scientific community lost a wonderful member and, many of us, a cordial friend. We all share the loss and sadness with his family.

Wolfgang Haase, Monika Marzec, Stanisław Urban
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