

Professor Czesław Radzikowski



(Fot. P. Kuśnierczyk)

Professor Czesław Radzikowski has turned 90 on July 17, 2019, but he is still very active. Although retired since 2001, he carries out his academic and didactic activities at the Hirszfeld Institute of Immunology and Experimental Therapy of Polish Academy of Sciences (without employment), taking care of the Student Scientific Circle who hold bachelor's degree, scientific practice or master's thesis (altogether about 120 individuals per year). In addition, he has been an active member of the Scientific Board of the Institute till 2018. Since 2009, he is a president of the Commission of Natural Sciences and Medicine based in Wrocław as a branch of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, and he is organizing regular seminars popularizing the fascinating progress in biomedical studies, particularly in molecular biology, among medical doctors, teachers as well as university and high school students. For this purpose, he invites recognized researchers working in high ranking institutions abroad but educated in universities and institutes in our region. Therefore, Professor Radzikowski is still active, indeed.

Czesław Marian Radzikowski was born on July 17, 1929 in Bydgoszcz (west-northern Poland). He completed his study in medicine in Gdańsk (1948–1953), achieving the specialization of 2nd grade in pathological anatomy in 1959, and a Ph.D. degree in the same year. Starting as a student, he worked in the Department of Pathological Anatomy in Gdańsk (1951–1968) as an assistant, senior assistant and assistant professor. Then, he moved to our Institute, where he works to this day, first as an associate professor (1971) then as a full professor (1982).

In the meantime, C. Radzikowski did many scientific internships abroad: in the U.S.A., in the National Cancer Institute, N.I.H. in Bethesda and in the Sloan-Kettering Cancer Institute, Walker Laboratory in 1962/63 as a postdoctoral fellow of the Fullbright Foundation, and shorter visits there in 1970–1980; also in Roswell Park Memorial Cancer Center, Buffalo, in 1978 and 1981. He also worked in Copenhagen (Denmark) in Fibiger Laboratoriet as a scholar of the Danish Cancer Society (multiple stays, from several months to one year, in between 1967–2000) and in Bartholin Institutet several times as part of the bilateral agreement on scientific collaboration.

In 1969, Czesław Radzikowski organized the Laboratory of Tumor Immunology in our Institute, which was transformed into the Department of Tumor Immunology after moving the Institute to a new building in 1975. He oversaw this department till his retirement in 2000. In this period, 18 doctors graduated under his tutelage. Of these, 10 became associate professors, and 7 achieved a position of full professor, either in our Institute (4 individuals leading their groups here) or elsewhere in Wrocław (one, at the University of Wrocław), or abroad (one in Norway and one in Canada). One of his co-workers (Prof. Danuta Duś) was a Director of our Institute in 2010–2014.

Professor Radzikowski introduced to Poland modern methods of screening new potential anti-cancer drugs on laboratory animals. To improve the quality of screening new drugs, C. Radzikowski spent a lot of energy on standardization and welfare of laboratory animal breeding. Genetic monitoring of inbred strains of laboratory mice in Poland was regularly performed by his team and presented on meetings of laboratory animal breeders together with other aspects of their duties. Prof. Radzikowski was a member of the Governing Board of International Committee of Laboratory Animal Science (ICLAS), organized a Polish branch of ICLAS, and an international meeting of ICLAS was held by him in our Institute in 2001 to the benefit of wide audience from many scientific institutions in Poland working on laboratory animals. Prof. Radzikowski also put emphasis on the ethical aspects of work on laboratory animals. For many years he was Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Zwierzęta Laboratoryjne* (“Laboratory Animals”) presenting original and review articles on laboratory animal science, among them reports on genetic monitoring of inbred mice from Poland and even from India.

In collaboration with Professor Andrzej Ledóchowski (1923–1984) from Polytechnical University in Gdańsk, Professor Radzikowski introduced a new original anti-cancer drug, Ledakrin. In addition, his team tested many reproduced drugs, not protected in that time (in the Polish People’s Republic) by patents, in order to introduce them into our country’s clinics, as the Western originals were much too expensive for the Polish People’s Republic.

Scientific activity of Professor Radzikowski covered several fields of tumor biology, from molecular biology of mammary-leukemia (ML) antigen in mice and some human tumor antigens, tumor glycobiology, through experimental chemotherapy of tumors in mice with a large repertoire of chemicals and also with biological agents, biological differences between drug-sensitive and drug-resistant tumors, experimental tumor metastasis, to major histocompatibility antigen expression on tumor cells. This resulted in 142 publications [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=Radzikowski_C], many scientific meeting reports, lectures and seminars, and the graduation of many students mentioned above.

The list of Scientific Boards of scientific institutions that invited Prof. Radzikowski for a membership is long, as is also the list of editorial boards of scientific journals (including

Postępy Higieny i Medycyny Doświadczalnej) and scientific societies. For example, he was a founding member of the Polish Immunological Society (now Polish Society of Experimental and Clinical Immunology) and co-organizer of its first congress in 1975 in the newly-opened building of our Institute at Rudolfa Weigla 12. Therefore, since 1995 he is a honorary member of this Society, and in 2014 he was honoured with the medal of the Polish Society of Experimental and Clinical Immunology. The list of his decorations, prizes and medals is particularly impressive. As mentioned at the beginning, he is a member of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (2002 – member-correspondent, 2013 – active member).

Professor Radzikowski has a son Piotr, senior lecturer of English (Gdańsk University), a daughter Louise, senior scientist, Novo Nordisk (Denmark) and five grandchildren.

Last but not least, Professor Radzikowski was a human boss, and there was a friendly atmosphere in his department. Although demanding, he always tried to get the best from the each of his co-workers. He was even open to criticism. When I joined his group in 1971, there was an inscription in his office, saying: “We are not here to caress each other!” Therefore, we discussed a lot of the lab, particularly at the beginning, before the move to the new building. In the old Institute (Tytusa Chałubińskiego 4), our lab had only one room plus a small annex with the boss’s office, so scientific discussions were natural. After the move to a huge building in a new place (Rudolfa Weigla 12), the staff was divided among many rooms, so discussions were easy only at weekly meetings. Still, we used to spend a lot of time together, e.g. at parties to celebrate a doctorate or habilitation, or a nomination of the boss to a titulus of professor. These events integrated us very well. Prof. Radzikowski even invited us several times to his home.

Now, when I have time, I enjoy visiting our Professor in his office for a talk. He sometimes gives me good advice. I wish him many more years of his fruitful activity.

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