(1928–2002)

OBITUARY

It is with deep sorrow and bitter regret that we bid farewell to Professor Zdzisław Kleinrok, who died on 30 September 2002. His close friends and coworkers were acquainted with the fact of his grave and dangerous illness, yet his everyday intense and creative activity did not admit a possibility of his such an early decease.

Professor Zdzisław Kleinrok was born on 4 October, 1928 in Kozłów near Tarnopol. In 1945, he and his family were displaced to Gliwice. In this city, he obtained secondary-school certificate upon completion of the Second Secondary School. He commenced the studies at the Faculty of Medicine of the Silesian Medical Academy in Zabrze-Rokitnica in 1948, and after completion of the first academic year, he began a job as a deputy assistant at the Chair of General Chemistry, and in January 1951 he was employed at the Chair of Pharmacology. He was qualified as a medical doctor in 1953 and in 1959 he was awarded a doctor’s degree upon the presentation of a doctor’s thesis entitled “The influence of methionine on experimental atherosclerosis”. In 1965, he was qualified as assistant professor presenting the thesis “The sensitivity of normal and atherosclerotic blood vessels to catecholamines in white rats”.

In 1967, by winning an open competition he was employed as a head of the Department of Pharmacology at the Medical Academy in Lublin. The Council of the Faculty of Pharmacy appointed him as the head of the Department of Pharmacodynamics, besides heading the Chair of Pharmacology. He held this office until 1974. In the years 1953–1965, Zdzisław Kleinrok, Ph.D. worked also as a physician in industrial medical service and obtained the first and second degree of specialization in industrial medicine. He received scientific training at the Department of Hygiene and Work Physiology of the Technical University in Zurich in 1959 and at the Department of Pharmacology of the Institute of
Experimental Biology of the Academy of Medical Sciences USSR in Leningrad in 1962. He was awarded professor’s degree in 1974 and full professor’s degree in 1982.

Scientific interests of Professor Z. Kleinrok comprised principally pathogenesis and therapy of experimental atherosclerosis, and after the change of job, he continued the works started by Professor J. Maj in the field of neuro- and psychopharmacology with special consideration given to psychotropic and antiepileptic drugs, and the effects of multiple electric shocks. He conducted research on pharmacological properties on over 500 newly synthesized chemical compounds with therapeutic potential. Professor Z. Kleinrok had splendid scientific achievements. He was an author or co-author of 450 original papers, half of which was published in international journals with high impact factor.

Among the more important scientific achievements of Professor, the following should be mentioned:

— determination of the role of neurotransmitters in animals’ behavior and in the mechanism of action of different drugs, and clarification of specific interactions between various neurotransmitter systems,
— discovery of adaptive changes in receptors after repetitive electric shocks following chronic administration of psychotropic drugs and insulin,
— development of three models for seizure induction in experimental animals and establishing the role of neurotransmitter systems in these models,
— discovery of different effects of low and high doses of some drugs on neurotransmission,
— determination of the role of kinin system in the mechanisms of action of hypotensive drugs and coronary vasodilators,
— ascertainment of adverse reactions of some antineoplastic drugs: anthracycline, cyclophosphamide, ifosfamide and thiophosphamide, and their newly synthesized derivatives.
— studies into the influence of various drugs on the function of the isolated liver and pancreas.

Professor Z. Kleinrok had been immensely active in many different fields. He held the most important offices at the university. He was a deputy dean and dean of the Faculty of Medicine, and the rector of the Medical Academy in Lublin for 3 terms. He performed the highest functions at the Polish Pharmacological Society, as he was its president and founding member and at the Scientific Society in Lublin, as he was its secretary. He was elected twice a member of the Central Commission for Scientific Titles and Degrees. He was a member of many Scientific Committees and Commissions of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He was a chairman of the Committee for Physiological Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences, a member of the Scientific Council of the Institute of Pharmacology, Polish Academy of Sciences and the Scientific Council of the Institute of Rural Medicine, of which he was a chairman. He was a member of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a member of numerous international and Polish scientific societies: New York Academy of Sciences, International Society of Biochemical Pharmacology, European Behavioral Pharmacological Society, European College of Neuropsychopharmacology.

International respect for Professor Z. Kleinrok was evidenced by his membership in the Editorial Board of the European Journal of Pharmacology. He was also co-editor of the Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology.

Professor Z. Kleinrok had an immense share in the development of Polish pharmacology, particularly in graduate and postgraduate training. He was a professor conferring doctor’s degree on 34 students, and a professor qualifying for associate professorship for 18 researchers. Nine doctors qualified for associate professorship at the Department of Pharmacology were awarded professor’s degree, and seven of them head different scientific institutes. Professor Z. Kleinrok was a reviewer of 155 doctor’s theses and 55 theses qualifying for assistant professorship.

He was an editor or co-editor of 3 handbooks, and an author of 30 chapters in 8 handbooks of pharmacology, pathophysiology and therapy.

In 1996, his handbook entitled “Pharmacology” edited together with Professor A. Danysz was rated the second best medical handbook in Poland.

A sign of high regard and esteem for Professor Z. Kleinrok were prestige prizes awarded to him: the Prize of the Scientific Secretary of the Polish Academy of Sciences (thrice), J. Śniadecki Prize, many awards of the rector of the Medical Academy. To pay tribute to his eminent achievements in scientific research, their organization and education, he was praised with the highest academic award, the honoris causa doctorate by the University of Tartu (1991), Silesian Medical Academy in 1996.
Katowice (1996) and International Open University of Complementary Medicine in Munich (1999). Besides, Professor Z. Kleinrok was awarded many state prizes, including second class of the Order of the Work.

Professor Z. Kleinrok was endowed with eminent scientific and organizational talent, he was a man of great kindness and generosity for people which won him widespread respect and admiration of his coworkers.

In 1999 Professor Zdzisław Kleinrok retired from work but in spite of this he continued his scientific activity every day until his health condition allowed him to do so. In 2000, the 50th anniversary of his scientific activity was celebrated.

It is a sad and painful fact that an irreducible gap has arisen in both Polish pharmacology and at the Department of Pharmacology Medical Academy in Lublin, what remains is deep and inconsolable grief and sorrow of his near relatives, friends and coworkers. Professor will always have a special place in our hearts and minds.

Marian Wielosz
Iwona Żebrowska-Łupina