



Professor dr hab. med. Józef Kałuża

10. 03. 1929 – 26. 07. 2003

Head, Editorial Board, Polish Journal of Pathology

On 26th of July, 2003, we were struck with the sad news about the death of Professor dr hab. Józef Kałuża. For all who knew Professor Kałuża, the news was in equal parts sad and unexpected and even inconceivable, considering the enormous vital and mental energy radiating from him to the very last hours of his life. He was truly a man of knowledge and a man of righteousness. One may say without a doubt that in the field of neuropathology in Poland he was among the genuine and very few "corner stones" of this medical and scientific discipline.

He was born on 10th of March, 1929 in Knurów, Silesia, where he spent his childhood. It was a difficult time of war and as a 13-year old Polish boy living in the region incorporated to the Third Reich, he was banned from school and forced to start working as an apprentice of an electrician in a German company. But it was also a time that shaped his patriotism, first of all due to the atmosphere of his family home, where Polish traditions were nurtured and children were raised in the spirit of and commitment to the most important human and civic virtues.

He graduated from high school in Rybnik in 1949 and entered the Medical Faculty of the Jagiellonian University.

Having graduated from the Faculty of Medicine in 1954, he started his medical and scientific career at the Chair and Department of Forensic Medicine in Krakow, where he was an assistant to Professor

Jan Olbrycht and where he worked till 1962. During these years, he also worked as a physician in a primary care facility in Podgórze (a quarter of Kraków).

Then he turned to neuropathology and in 1962 he became employed in the Department of Neuropathology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, which had been founded and directed by Professor Adam Kunicki. Professor Adam Kunicki was also the promoter of his Ph.D. thesis entitled "The dynamics of morphological changes in brain caused by mechanical injury".

In the years 1968 - 1975, he worked for the Institute of Pharmacology, Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków and later returned to the Medical Academy in Kraków as the head of Neuropathology Department included in a newly established Institute of Neurology. During this period he was promoted to an associate professorship based on the thesis entitled "Experimental brain edema - comparative investigations of cryogenic necrosis and brain wound" prepared under the supervision of Professor Józef Hano. In 1981, he was promoted to tenure professorship in neuropathology.

After his retirement, he incessantly continued his work being employed part-time as Professor Emeritus up to the very last days of his life.

Professor Józef Kałuża was the author more than 110 articles published in Polish and foreign scientific and medical periodicals and he authored or co-authored many chapters in handbooks.

Cerebral trauma was his very first topic of scientific interest. Later he turned his attention to histochemistry. It was also a fruit of his scholarship granted by the Rockefeller Foundation and spent at the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, the US, in the years 1962 - 1963.

He became an especially renowned and respected scholar in neurooncology in Poland and beyond its borders. His diagnostic experience in brain tumors and tumors of the spinal cord was enormous and numerous neurosurgical departments outside of Kraków, such as those in Rzeszów, Jastrzębie Zdrój, Kielce, and Tamów, sought his consultations. Since the foundation of the Polish-American Institute of Pediatrics in Kraków-Prokocim, Professor Kałuża became involved in the activities of its Department of Pathology, performing neuropathological examinations, including biopsies of tumors of the central and peripheral nervous system, cerebro-spinal fluid cytology, and examination of muscle biopsies. His close cooperation with the Department of Pediatrics in the Polish-American Institute of Pediatrics, and especially with the Department of Pediatric Neurology of the Silesian Medical Academy in Katowice, resulted in many publications on neurological pediatric disorders, such as leucodystrophies and other encephalopathies of childhood.

Long standing and very deep ties, not only professional in character, but also motivated by true and steadfast friendships, linked professor Kałuża with neuropathologists and neuroscientists from all over Poland, especially from the Warsaw Institute of Experimental and Clinical Medicine and the Polish Academy of Sciences, including the former head of the latter, Professor Mirosław Mossakowski. Professor Kałuża was a member of the Committee of Neurological Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the chairman of its Commission of Neurooncology since 1973 until his death.

Professor Kałuża was one of the founders of the Association of Polish Neuropathologists, being its exceptionally ardent and active member and its chairman in 1987 - 1991. He truly treated the Association as a kind of his "extended family", caring for its prestige and sharing his experience and also his scientific fascinations and problems with all members of the Association, always willing to help and to cooperate. Professor Kałuża was a founder of strong scientific ties between Polish and German neuropathologists and neuropathologists from other countries. He was the organizer of the Polish-German Scientific Conference of Neuropathologists in Kraków in 1980.

Professor Kałuża, having received extensive training in general pathology under the tutelage of Professor Janina Kowalczykova, the then Chair of Pathology in Kraków, always maintained close links with the Chair and later the Institute of Pathology and with the successors of Professor Kowalczykova, being among others an active member of the Polish Society of Pathologists, especially of its Division in Krakow, a Head of the "Polish Journal of Pathology" in the years 1991 - 1998, and presenting lectures

on neuropathology for 3rd and 4th year medical students as a part of their curriculum on general pathology.

The years 1980 - 1981, the "years of Solidarity movement", boosted his involvement in social issues. He was elected the Deputy-Dean of Medical Faculty of the Medical Academy in Kraków, then during two consecutive terms (1984 - 1990), Professor Kałuza was the Dean of Medical Faculty. He was also elected the member and the representative of the Medical Academy in Kraków in the Superior Council of High Education and Science at the Ministry of High Education and Science in the years 1982 - 1985. As the Dean of Medical Faculty, Professor Kałuza tried to do his best to keep up the standards of scientific activity, standards of didactics, and standards of medical treatment. Since 1976 until his death, Professor Kałuza was the Curator of the Self-help Fund of Professors of Medical Faculty, the function of which was among others financial assistance rendered to widows of the Faculty members. To this post, Professor Kałuza was appointed by the Council of the Medical Faculty.

In the nineties, Professor Kałuza found two other fields of activity: neurobiology - a subject newly introduced to the curriculum of the Medical Faculty, and medical ethics. At first, medical ethics was rather a novelty in the Medical Faculty of the Jagiellonian University, but the following years proved an increased importance of this discipline in the whole world. The humanity and in a special sense the medical world faced extremely difficult and challenging problems, such as euthanasia, genetic engineering, living and suffering in terminal phase of diseases, to say nothing of abortion, transplantation, especially transplantation with the use of fetal organs, etc. These and similar topics Professor Kałuza addressed in his lectures on ethics for Medical Faculty students.

It is difficult to enumerate all the societies, associations and scientific councils of which he was a member, to count his functions and activities, and to list various diplomas and awards received by Professor Kałuza. Since 1999, he was the member-correspondent of the Polish Academy of Art and Sciences. Professor Kałuza was an active member of the Polish Society of Histochemists and Cytochemists. In the years 1976 - 1992, he was the Editor-in-Chief of the "Folia Histochemica and Cytobiologica".

He was also an active member of the Polish Medical Society, Medical Society of Kraków, and the Association of Catholic Physicians. Professor Kałuza was conferred on the Order of "Polonia Restituta" and the "Medal of the National Education Commission".

Professor Józef Kałuza was by no means only an ardent scholar. Having been his disciple, apprentice and co-worker for twenty odd years, I knew that he loved life, he loved his family, he loved the company of friends, he loved feasting with his friends and co-workers, he loved music and film (he had an astonishingly deep knowledge of films and traditional jazz and even pop-music!), he loved the Tatras and mountain hiking, he loved good cooking and himself was an absolutely extraordinary chef (marvelous cakes, and beef Stroganoff, for example!), and he loved many other good things.

Professor Józef Kałuza especially valued the writings of St. Paul. Therefore, during the funeral ceremony at the Rakowicki Cemetery - the place of his final rest, I dared to invoke the words from St. Paul's 2nd epistle to Timothy speaking of a "good fight", since one can truly say that by his laborious and righteous life, Professor Józef Kałuza fought a truly "good fight" and in our mundane judgement he deserves what the same St. Paul calls a few words later in this epistle the "crown of righteousness" (2 Timothy 4:7-8 NIV).

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