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Obituary for Prof. Kazimierz Rzym ski

Piotr Rzym ski

Department of Environmental Medicine, Poznań University of Medical Sciences, Poznań, Poland

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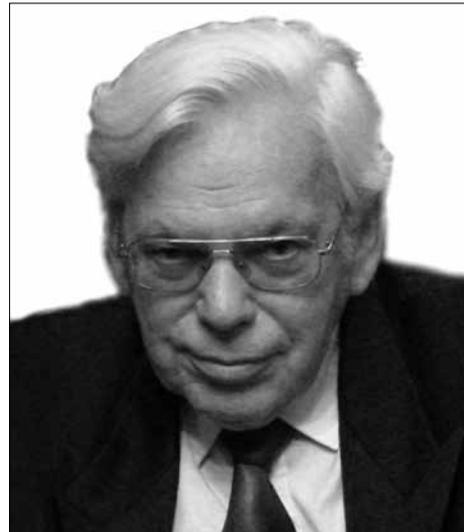
Kazimierz Rzym ski, one of the most respected Polish radiologists and a pioneer in computed tomography in Central-Eastern Europe, died suddenly on January 23, 2015 at the age of 82 in Heliodor Świącicki Clinical Hospital of the Poznań University of Medical Sciences, a place at which he had worked passionately for most of his life and to which he always referred to as his "second home".

Born on March 13, 1932 in the small town of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, he was raised during the difficult times of war, hunger and human tragedy. His relentless desire to become a medical doctor and serve humanity succeeded in 1958 when he graduated from Poznań Academy of Medical Sciences (later Poznań University of Medical Sciences, PUMS). From that time on, he worked continuously, both professionally and scientifically. In 1962 he received the first national degree of post-graduate specialization in radiology; in 1965 – a second and final degree, while in 1968 he conducted a successful defence of his PhD thesis.

A talented scientist and medical doctor, Kazimierz Rzym ski possessed unprecedented administrative skills. He was strict but fair, calm and honest, never submissive to political correctness, a man of honour. During his career he was elected as Head of the Department of Radiology at the Voivodeship Anti-tuberculosis Hospital in Poznań (1963–1976), Head of the PUMS Institute of Radiology (1982–1987), Head of the Department of Radiology at the Military Clinical Hospital in Wrocław (1991–1993) and Head of the PUMS Department of Gastroenterological Radiology (1982–2002). For three years he served as an Associate Dean of the Medical Faculty of PUMS (1987–1990) and then became a Dean (1990–1996). He was never afraid to publicly admit that his success as an academic authority was a result of the hard work of many administrative workers and the staff of the Dean's Office.

Medical students and radiological technicians remember Kazimierz Rzym ski as an exceptional lecturer and gentlemen. Despite an increasing number of obligations, he had enormous patience and understanding for young people, whose teaching and inspiring was one of his many life-long passions.

Always interested in conventional radiology, Kazimierz Rzym ski was also open to diagnostic innovation. He was present in 1979 with Prof. Jerzy Wójtowicz, when the first computed tomography (CT) scan was installed in a Polish hospital. Seeing the potential and the abilities of CT, he



Prof. Kazimierz Rzym ski • 1932–2015.

made every effort to popularize it as a diagnostic method. As a co-founder of the Polish school of CT, he travelled to teach a great number of radiologists and radiological technicians in Poland, was invited to conduct training courses in Eastern Europe and was visited by specialists from abroad. In this part of the world, Kazimierz Rzym ski soon became recognized as an unquestionable authority in CT imaging. Overall, he directed nine National Scientific Projects on early diagnosis of kidney, urinary bladder, liver, esophagus, stomach and colon cancers. Till the last days of his life he voluntarily consulted the results sent from numerous places in Poland, served on various clinical councils and gave away his books to young adepts of radiological art. Despite worsening health, he retained an outstanding radiological memory and ability to solve unusual cases.

During his career, Prof. Kazimierz Rzym ski co-authored over 250 papers, numerous books and chapters on radiological imaging, particularly concerning the various uses of CT, ultrasonography and magnetic resonance, diagnostics of gastroenterological and gynaecological disorders, and imaging of neoplasm. Always striving to perfect his scientific and professional knowledge, and medical practice, he participated in scientific internships in Cleveland, Stuttgart, Tübingen, Karlsruhe, Amsterdam and Paris. Despite the political difficulties in Poland, he succeeded in attending numerous international congresses and meetings

on radiology. From 1979 Prof. Kazimierz Rzyski participated in every International Congress of Radiology (ICR) and European Congress of Radiology (ECR). Rather than souvenirs, he brought back issues of international journals on radiology, entirely unavailable back then in Poland, and happily shared them with other Polish radiologists.

His devotion to teaching new adepts of radiological art, to develop new applications in CT and to popularize the use of new imaging methods was numerously awarded: three times by the Polish Ministry of Health and Social Care, the Polish Medical Radiological Society, the Polish Society of Gastroenterology, the Falk Foundation and maybe most importantly, by handicapped children. His impressive achievement as a scientist, lecturer and academic authority was recognised in 2012 when he received the PUMS Golden

Laurel Award. Finally, for his outstanding and pioneering contribution to Polish diagnostic radiology and for advancing the quality of radiological services in Poland, he was decorated with the highest national honours: the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta and the Gold Cross of Merit.

Prof. Kazimierz Rzyski, an exceptional persona, was always, day or night, ready to work, consistently on his duty, with an honest and warming smile on his face, regardless of his medical condition, despite an amputated limb, chronic heart failure and many other health problems.

He is survived by his wife Iwona, also a radiologist, two sons Paweł and Piotr, his three grandchildren and many others who have been inspired by his work and life.