

Laudation in honor of Professor Eugene J. Kucharz on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday

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The present supplement of the *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine* introduces papers specially dedicated to Professor Eugene Joseph Leszek Kucharz on his sixtieth birthday anniversary.

Eugene J. Kucharz, the only child of Bożena H. Kucharz (née Hadrys) and Józef Kucharz, was born on 4 January 1951 in Katowice, Poland. He attended primary and secondary schools in his hometown of Katowice where he obtained a secondary school diploma at the Nicolas Copernicus Secondary School in 1968. Astounding achievements resulted in his being listed among the best secondary-school graduates of what was at the time the Katowice Voivodeship. In 1974, he graduated with honors from the School of Medicine at the Medical University of Silesia. Upon graduation, not only did he begin to work at the Department of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Diagnostics, a part of the newly opened School of Pharmacy, but also continued to receive a postgraduate medical training at the 2nd Ward of Internal Medicine at the Municipal Hospital no. 1 in Sosnowiec. In 1978, he earned the title of Doctor of Medicine (research doctorate) from the School of Medicine at his Alma Mater. In 1982, he was appointed head of the Department of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Diagnostics and, having obtained a postdoctoral degree (so called habilitation), he was officially promoted to the head of this Department in 1984. He was conferred the title of Associate Professor in 1985. For 3 consecutive years, from 1986 to 1988, he worked at the Arthritis Center of the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, United States. Upon his return to Poland, from February 1989, he performed assistant duties at the Regional Hospital no. 1 in Tychy, and, in October of that year, he became a lecturer at the 4th Internal Medicine Department of the Medical University of Silesia. Professor Kucharz was offered a position of associate professor (professor extraordinarius) in

1992, whereas in 1994, he was conferred the title of professor and earned the position of full professor (professor ordinarius) in 2000. He started to head the 4th Department of Internal Medicine in 1996 which, on his motion, was transformed into the Department of Internal Medicine and Rheumatology based in Katowice as of 1 March 2000. Professor Kucharz obtained a board specialization in laboratory diagnostics in 1977, internal medicine (1st degree, 1978, and 2nd degree, 1985), rheumatology in 2000, and angiology in 2003.

Eugene J. Kucharz's extensive scientific work includes not only 64 books and book chapters, but also 268 original publications, 235 review papers and case reports, as well as 162 publications on the history of medicine. In addition, the publications list is enriched by more than 600 conference and congress abstracts, numerous reports, journalistic articles, popular science papers and reviews published in leading Polish and international scientific journals.

Published in New York and Berlin in 1992, a comprehensive monograph entitled *The Collagens: Biochemistry and Pathophysiology* is considered Professor Kucharz's most significant publication. It was the first work on collagen proteins to be published in history that was intended for physicians and, thus, not only introduced the theory on the biochemistry of these proteins but also presented a wide spectrum of pathophysiological problems as well as their importance in pathogenesis and treatment.

Professor Kucharz has been active as a coauthor of Polish medical coursebooks for many years. In 1995, he wrote a chapter to the *Internal Diseases (Choroby wewnętrzne)*, a three-volume handbook edited by Andrzej Wojtczak. He also contributed to the *Internal Medicine (Interna)* textbook edited by Włodzimierz Januszewicz and Franciszek Kokot (1st edition, 2002; 2nd edition,

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2006). He wrote a few chapters included in the *Internal Diseases (Choroby wewnętrzne)* handbook edited by Andrzej Szczeklik (1st edition, 2006; 2nd edition, 2010; 3rd edition, 2011; 4th edition, 2012). Furthermore, Professor Kucharz is a coauthor of the abridged version of the *Internal Medicine* coursebook – *Internal Medicine. A Compendium of Practical Medicine (Choroby wewnętrzne – Kompendium Medycyny Praktycznej)*; 1st edition, 2009; 2nd edition, 2010; 3rd edition, 2011). The *Great Handbook of Internal Medicine (Wielka Interna)* published in 2010 introduces a number of his chapters on rheumatology (Volume 9, edited by Mariusz Puszczewicz), whereas *Family Medicine (Medycyna rodzinna)*, edited by Andrzej Stewciwko, features the Professor's chapters on rheumatology in adults. He also wrote chapters to numerous specialized handbooks, among others, to *Clinical Rheumatology (Reumatologia kliniczna)* edited by Irena Zimmermann-Górska in 2008, and made a contribution as a coauthor to the second edition of the *Clinical Physiopathology (Patofizjologia kliniczna)* handbook (under the editorship of Barbara Zahorska-Markiewicz and Ewa Małecka-Tendera, 2009). Serial publications *Rheumatology* 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 as well as *New trends (Reumatologia. Nowe trendy)*, edited by Piotr Wiland, Poznań, 2011 and Poznań, 2012, introduce Professor Kucharz's chapter on osteoarthritis.

Professor Kucharz coauthored *Vademecum of Internal Medicine (Vademecum Medycyny Wewnętrznej)*, edited by Jan Duława, and collaborated on a number of monographs, including *Vascular Surgery: an Outline (Chirurgia naczyń w zarysie)* edited by Krzysztof Ziaja and Tomasz Urbanek, 2006, and *Enbrel: A Clinical Application (Enbrel: zastosowanie kliniczne)* edited by Jacek Szechciński in 2008 and the 2nd edition by Piotr Wiland in 2012.

In 2004, at Professor Kucharz's initiative, the first edition of a series of academic medical handbooks (2004–2007), published as the *Gold Series of Polish Internal Medicine* by the PZWL Medicine Publishing House (Wydawnictwo Lekarskie PZWL), came to light. It was published to celebrate the 100th anniversary of establishing the Polish Society of Internal Medicine. Each book of the series, consisting of more than 10 altogether, features a foreword written by the Professor himself.

Professor Kucharz is known as a translator and editor of numerous medical books translated from English, e.g., *Washington Manual of Medical Therapeutics* (under the editorship of Ewald G.A. and McKenzie C.R., 1997) and *Medicine* (under the editorship of J. Axford, 1998), *Case files – Internal Medicine* (E.C. Toy, J.T. Jr. Patlan, F. Faustinella, S.E. Cruse, 2009). He translated chapters of, among others, *Harper's Illustrated Biochemistry* (Polish edition, 1994, 1998, 2002, and 2008), a chapter of *The Merck Manual* (MSD Manual – a textbook of diagnostics and therapy) (the 1st Polish edition, 1995) and *Parkland*

Manual of In-Patient Medicine: An Evidence-Based Guide (J.N. Katz, C.B. Patel, M.K. Aslam, 2009). Eugene J. Kucharz translated also a chapter of *Klinikleitfaden Labordiagnostik* (under the editorship of B. Neumeister, I. Besenthal, H. Liebich, 2001) from German to Polish.

Published in Polish, English, and Russian, a special publication by Eugene J. Kucharz in a form of an extensive essay entitled "Man is the way of medicine" constitutes an open letter announced to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine. It is an exhaustive analysis of problems arising from internal medicine development in the light of developmental directions of medical science and medical practice.

Eugene J. Kucharz began his scientific pursuit as a third-year student at the Department of Physiological Chemistry under the supervision of Professor Stanisław Józkiwicz. At that time, his scientific interest focused on experimental hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism studies. During that period, his first articles were published, including a paper on the influence of thyroid hormones on the function of 5'-nucleotidase in tissue printed in *Endocrinology*. In the fifth year of studies, Eugene J. Kucharz was the first student at the Medical University of Silesia to receive an individual study plan, and an approval to commence preparations for his PhD research. His study focused on an experimental collagen-like disease induced by chronic application of hydralazine to guinea pigs. After graduation, he continued his research as a member of the team supervised by Professor Marian Drożdż. The study results were presented in his PhD thesis, which concerned a collagen metabolism malfunction in the experimental collagen-like disease. At that time, his description of an effective method which consisted in inducing the collagen-like disease in guinea pigs came to light. He proved that animals suffering from this disease manifest impaired collagen fiber maturation, and put forward a hypothesis on the lysyl oxidase malfunction due to hydralazine. This thesis was confirmed by Japanese scientists, who referred to the name of Professor Kucharz several years after his observation had been published in *Experimental Pathology*. At the same time, Professor Kucharz studied the influence of toxic exhaust gases on connective tissue metabolism.

In the next years, he continued his research on connective tissue metabolism in experimental animal models and in clinical studies. His scientific work concentrated on, inter alia, connective tissue metabolism during pregnancy, in post-partum period, and in heart attack patients; furthermore, he investigated circadian rhythm changes of collagen peptidase activity in serum and tissues of a rat, the influence of nonsteroidal antirheumatic drugs on the metabolism of connective tissue and liver condition of a tissue culture in vitro, the influence of fluorine and other substances on collagen transformations, glycosaminoglycans, and glycoproteins.

Professor Kucharz made a remarkable effort to investigate regulation of liver fibrosis process in animal models and in patients suffering from hepatic cirrhosis or hepatitis. He demonstrated changeable dynamics of synthesis and degradation of collagen in liver fibrosis, and proposed, at the same time, that the unbalanced degradation to synthesis ratio is a turning point of transition of a reversible liver impairment into an irreversible process. This paper, published in *Connective Tissue Research*, has been cited on numerous occasions. Furthermore, he continued to examine collagen-glycosaminoglycan interactions during the development of hepatic fibrosis. He coined a modification method of hydroxyproline determination that, surprisingly for its inventors, has been widely applied in the biochemistry of plants, and is often quoted in the most prominent botanical journals. He is also known to be a coauthor of a method used for hydroxylysine and collagenolytic cathepsin determination.

At the Medical College of Wisconsin, United States, he worked in the team supervised by Professor Daniel McCarty Jr, in the group of Professor James S. Goodwin. His studies focused, inter alia, on lymphocyte activation in patients suffering from systemic lupus erythematosus. In the course of his research, he discovered an impairment of calcium-mediated signal transduction pathway in these cells as well as a partial reversal of this defect due to lithium activity in vitro. His scientific achievements include a description of a method of the interleukin-2 inhibitor determination; also, he demonstrated an increased activity of this inhibitor in patients with systemic lupus erythematosus. Additionally, he proved that hydralazine increases binding of antibodies with lymphocytes. For several years to come, these results were often cited in leading monographs on systemic lupus erythematosus.

Upon his return from the United States, a clinical subject matter arose Eugene J. Kucharz's scientific interest (under the supervision of Professor Gerard Jonderko, 1989–1995). His clinical research focused on, inter alia, internal organ involvement in patients with systemic sclerosis in which he demonstrated, among others, a beneficial effect of administering erythromycin as a motilin antagonist for gastric emptying, gall bladder motility disorder, increased serum level of prolactin, and cognitive function disorder in patients suffering from systemic sclerosis. Not only did he observe and describe the occurrence of Behçet disease in Poland, but also participated in research on pathophysiology of thyroid function (including its influence on collagen metabolism, arterial hypertension, and free radical generation) and studied lipid metabolism in patients with systemic connective tissue diseases as well as factors regulating angiogenesis. Recently, he has proposed to introduce a novel nosological unit, i.e., a chronic inflammation-enhanced atherosclerosis syndrome, as a syndrome of progressive atherosclerosis, which develops in patients

diagnosed with an inflammatory process located outside the vessels, particularly in patients diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis (*Reumatologia*, 2009; *Medical Hypotheses*, 2011).

Eugene J. Kucharz's accomplishments in the area of history of medicine are significant. In his works, the main emphasis is put on forgotten Polish medical discoveries. Several papers published in scientific journals such as *The Lancet*, *Journal of Laboratory and Clinical Medicine*, and *Materia Medica Polona* focused on Edmund Biernacki's top priority to discover the erythrocyte sedimentation rate. These papers available both in English and French are still frequently discussed and cited by scientists. In 1992, in *The Lancet*, Professor Kucharz, recalled the forgotten priority of Michał Lityński to discover the primary hyperaldosteronism. Later, a more comprehensive biography of that scientist by Professor Kucharz followed. The publication was noticed by Norman Kaplan, known to be the author of a monumental monograph on arterial hypertension, who requested Eugene J. Kucharz to provide him with the original copy of Michał Lityński's paper; since the 8th edition of *Hypertension*, a mention of the Polish scientist's priority to discover a disease commonly known as Conn syndrome is to be found in this book. Professor Kucharz paid a lot of attention to the outstanding internists, and, in the *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine*, he would publish biographies of those physicians who were awarded with the Medal of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine. He would make a mention of prominent contributions by Odon Bujwida, Witold E. Orłowski, Walery Jaworski, Edward Szczeklik, and Nanna Svartz. Publishing of the majority of historical works in English in reputable international journals is Professor Eugene J. Kucharz's particular credit, which plays an essential role in the promotion of achievements of Polish medicine worldwide. The biographical sketches of, among others, Ludwik Hirszfeld, Odon Bujwida, Witold E. Orłowski, Wojciech Oczko, Rafał Czerwiakowski, Henryk Jordan, Mściwoj Semerau-Siemianowski, Władysław Biegański, and Kazimierz Funk were published in the *Proceedings of Mayo Clinic*. Professor Kucharz's efforts resulted in the publication of papers on Józef Dietl as well as memories of Stanisław Konopka and Stanisław Szpilczyński in the International Academy of History of Medicine magazine entitled *Clio Medica*, whereas the article on Ludwik Rydygier came out in the *Investigative Urology*. Professor Kucharz elaborated on Johann Placotonus in the *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg*. Esperanto journals released his papers on Odo Bujwid. In addition, Professor's historical publications appeared in numerous international scientific journals. These included a monograph of Ludwik Maurycy Hirszfeld, an acclaimed Polish neuro-anatomist, published in *Hamdard Medicus* edited in Karachi, Pakistan, and an article on a little-known Greek god of internal medicine, Podelairos, which was published in the *European*

Journal of Internal Medicine and reprinted in a bulletin for Dutch internists.

An extended book monograph discussing the life and credits of Antoni Gluziński, the founder of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine, was published in the year of the 100th jubilee of the Society. Professor Kucharz authored several biographic entries released in the *Polish Biographical Dictionary* (*Polski Słownik Biograficzny*) and *Biographical Dictionary of Polish Medical Sciences of the 20th Century* (*Słownik Biograficzny Polskich Nauk Medycznych XX Wieku*). What is more, he wrote about other prominent personalities of whom one has to mention Herman Bolesław Fudakowski, Józef Polak, Hakaru Hashimoto, Hülusi Behçet, Ignacy Filip Semmelweis, Awicenna, Ilia Mechnokoff, Tytus Chałubiński, and Eleonora Reicher. Professor's numerous publications on the history of internal diseases, including the series of papers published in the *European Journal of Internal Medicine*, as well as his elaborations on the history of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine, all published in English in international magazines, deserve to be mentioned. Eugene J. Kucharz is also known to have initiated and authored a graphic concept of a series of Polish stamps issued to celebrate the centenary of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine as well as special-event date stamps.

Another area of history in which Professor takes particular interest is literature and its relation to medicine. He produced a dozen or so biographical papers of well-known physician-writers and physician-poets, inter alia, Aleksander Majkowski, Francis Brett Young, Richard Blackmore, John Keats, Samuel Garth, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Axel Munth, and François Rabelais. He studied student scientific activities and student organizations of the 19th century, which resulted in the publication of an extended elaboration paper on the history of student press ("Pen and Lancet" ["Pióro i Lancet"]) considered unique in the entire subject literature. For several years, Professor Kucharz authored the Medical University of Silesia Chronicle published in *Annales Academie Medicae Silesiensis*. Another Professor's distinguishable activity includes posthumous memories of eminent doctors he knew in person, including his teachers, among others, Stanisław Józkiwicz, and international doctors (inter alia, Eric Bywaters and Valentina Alexandrova Nasonova). He also contributes to the *Rheuma Roche* journal (Warsaw) where he publishes essays on relationships between medicine and art, e.g., blood-letting and medical aspects of famous portraits.

Professor Eugene J. Kucharz's professional work includes 23 completed doctorate dissertations, 71 reviews of PhD theses, 12 reviews of habilitation proceedings, 10 professor applications, and 33 MSc theses at the Department of Pharmacy.

Professor has been involved in the international scientific movement for many years. As a student, he gave speeches at international scientific

conferences on three occasions (in Kalinin, present Tver, in 1973 and 1974) and in Pilsen in 1973. In the period of intensive investigations into the metabolism of connective tissue, he participated in congresses of the European Federation of the Connective Tissue Research Societies in Prague (1980), Budapest (1984), Białystok (as chair of one of the congress sections in 1992), and Davos (1994).

In 1982, Professor Kucharz actively participated in the World Congress of International Society of Internal Medicine for the first time in Prague; 12 years later, in 1994 in Budapest, he was elected to the Executive Board of the International Society of Internal Medicine, and since then he has been a regular participant of all World Congresses of Internal Medicine (Manila, 1996; Lima, 1998; Cancun, 2000; Grenada, 2002; Kyoto, 2004; Taipei, 2006; Buenos Aires, 2008; and Melbourne, 2010). Apart from delivering numerous regular and plenary lectures, he chaired sessions including the opening ones (Manila, 1996; Lima, 1998). As a member of the Executive Board of the International Society of Internal Medicine, his main task consisted in introducing Central European societies of internal medicine into the International Society of Internal Medicine. Since 2004, he has been actively representing the Polish Society of Internal Medicine in the International Society of Internal Medicine – International Committee. It is necessary to emphasize that Professor accepted invitations to host lectures at postgraduate courses organized by the International Society of Internal Medicine (Pärnu, 1996; Vilnius, 1997; and Dubrovnik, 2000). In recognition of his merits for the international internal medicine, Professor Kucharz was conferred the title of an honorary member of the International Society of Internal Medicine at the World Congress of Internal Medicine in 2000. This distinction is awarded almost exclusively to former presidents of the International Society of Internal Medicine or organizers of the World Congresses of Internal Medicine.

A special attention is to be paid to Eugene J. Kucharz's efforts to unite internists from our region of Europe. Professor participated in all Central European Congresses of Internal Medicine (under various names), starting in Grado in 1996. In 1997, he acted as the first vice-president of the 2nd Mittler Europa Congress of Internal Medicine (Olomouc, 1997), and a year later, in 1998, he made efforts to organize the 3rd Central European Congress of Internal Medicine (Wisła, 1998) and led to conclude a Declaration of Cooperation of Central and Eastern European Internists, also referred to as the "Declaration from Wisła", which was signed by 11 countries. Professor Kucharz acted as Honorary President of the Congresses in Vienna (1999), Bratislava (2000), and Igalo (2001). In the light of formation of the European Federation of Internal Medicine and disappearance of political divisions in Europe, further congress organization was not necessary and was discontinued.

Eugene J. Kucharz's integrating actions for the international internal medicine brought numerous invitations to give lectures at international conferences on internal medicine, particularly, to host the first lecture once a given country joined the International Society of Internal Medicine. He delivered plenary speeches, among others, in Taipei (1996, 1998), Dubrovnik (1998), Belgrade (1998), Ljubljana (2001), Tallinn (1999), Minsk (2001), and Chişinău (2006, 2011).

Since 1999, his active participation has been observed in all Congresses of the European Federation of Internal Medicine (Edinburgh, 2001; Berlin, 2003; Paris, 2005; Lisbon, 2007; Rome, 2008; and Istanbul, 2009). He has been representing the Polish Society of Internal Medicine since 1992 and has actively participated in sessions in, among others, Antalya, London, Copenhagen, Bratislava, Dublin, Amsterdam, Asker near Oslo, Luzern, Bucharest, and Tel Aviv. At the Congress in Paris (2005), he was conferred the title of Honorary Fellow of the European Federation of Internal Medicine. He was also invited on a number of occasions to give plenary lectures at the European Congresses of Internal Medicine in, among others, Paris (2005), Lisbon (2007), Rome (2008) and Athens (2011), adding that, in 2009, he delivered a plenary lecture at the 20th Congress of the Russian Scientific Society of Internal Medicine in Moscow. Moreover, it is necessary to mention a Centenary Medal of the Russian Scientific Society of Internal Medicine which Professor received.

Professor Eugene J. Kucharz is known as an initiator and organizer of Polish-Slovak conferences on internal medicine, the oldest regularly organized event for internists from the two countries that have been taking place alternately in Poland and Slovakia since 2000. The Slovak conferences are organized by Ivan Ďuriš, Jan Murin, and Andrej Dukat. From 1993 to 2002, a special event known to public as the Polish and Czech Days of Internal Medicine were organized; not only did Eugene J. Kucharz take active part in all of these conferences, but also acted as an organizer of some of the meetings. The First Polish-Lithuanian Conference on Internal Medicine (Katowice, 2006) was also organized by Professor Kucharz; however, this undertaking was not continued in the years to come. It is necessary to mention that he was awarded with honorary membership by the Slovak Society of Internal Medicine (Ustroń, 2000), the Czech Doctors' Society of J.E. Purkyn together with the Czech Society of Internal Medicine (Zlin, 2001) and the Moldavian Society of Internal Medicine (Chişinău, 2011).

For many years, Professor Eugene J. Kucharz has been involved in the student scientific movement. As a university student, not only did he chair the Scientific Group at the Department of Physiological Chemistry, but also was a member of the Board of the Student Science Society; he made appearance at the 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th

University Science Conferences as well as the International Student Science Conference under the name of "Thyroid Gland" (Katowice, 1973), and initiated and organized an International Student Conference on Biochemistry and Physiology of the Connective Tissue "Intertecon" (Katowice, 1974). A distinction received at the 15th National Conference of Students' Science Societies "Symposium Medicum" (Poznań, 1974), and two prizes presented at university conferences only add to a considerable number of Professor Kucharz's awards. Moreover, he was elected a Medical University of Silesia delegate to the 1st and 2nd Congress of Student Scientific Movement (Warsaw, 1974 and Katowice, 1978).

After graduation, Eugene J. Kucharz became a member of a research program "Compounds with High Biological Activity" coordinated by the Institute of Pharmacology at the Polish Academy of Science in Cracow. Within the scope of this program, he performed a secretary's duties in an organizational committee of the 1st and 4th Conference (Wisła, 1977; Ustroń 1980). During the first conference, his pamphlet "Catecholamine" ("Katecholamina") was published. From 1975 to 1985, he made an active appearance at all conventions of the Polish Biochemical Society (13th Convention in Toruń, 1975; 14th in Lublin, 1976; 15th in Gdańsk, 1977; 16th in Łódź, 1978; 17th in Warsaw, 1980; 18th in Wrocław, 1981; 19th in Szczecin, 1983; 20th in Olsztyn, 1984; and 21st in Cracow, 1985). 1983 marked his first appearance at the 28th Congress of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine in Poznań.

Professor Kucharz is or was a member of several other scientific societies, including the Polish Medical Society (since 1974), the Polish Society of Laboratory Diagnostics (1975–1986), the Polish Pharmaceutical Society (1975–1986), the Polish Society of Catholic Physicians (as a vice-president of the Silesian Division, 1996–1999), the Polish Society of History of Medicine (a member since 1977; a member of the Central Auditing Committee, 1981–1984; a vice-president of the Silesian Division, 1978–1985; a chair of the Organizational Committee of "History of Pharmacy" Conference in Katowice, 1979; as well as the 13th Congress of the Polish Society of History of Medicine, Katowice 1982), the Polish Endocrinology Society (a vice-president of the Silesian Division, 1996–1999), the Polish Society of Arterial Hypertension (a vice-president of the Silesian Division, 1999–2002); he founded and continued to be a member of the Silesian Division of the Interdisciplinary Osteoporosis Forum (2000).

Professor Kucharz travelled abroad numerous times for scientific purposes. These included medical practice in Rome (1972), participation in the European Congress of Clinical Chemistry in Prague (1975), and, in the following year of 1976, in the jubilee Congress of Rheumatologists in Pistany organized on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the International League against Rheumatism. In the years

to come, he travelled to, inter alia, Dresden, Reinhardtsbrunn, Prague, Budapest, Plodiv, and Vienna. He was a noticeable participant of the Congress *Fédération Internationale de Pharmaceutique* (Warsaw, 1976).

Professor Kucharz has been a member of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine since 1978. In 1991, he became secretary of the Executive Board (1992–1995) and since 1995 performed duties of a vice-president of the Central Auditing Committee (until 1998); he established the Historic Committee in 1992 and since then has been the head of this organization.

In 2001, Professor Kucharz was elected president and performed the duties of president of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine from 2004 to 2008. Moreover, he has been chairing the International Cooperation Committee since 2008. During his term of office as acting president of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine, one celebrated the Society's 100th anniversary, and organization of the celebrations constituted one of the main tasks which Eugene J. Kucharz assigned to himself. The guiding principles of the celebrations consisted in presentation of the role of internal medicine in contemporary medicine and promoting integration of specialist societies. In the course of the event, the 1st and 2nd Gala of Polish Internal Medicine took place (Katowice, 2006 and 2007). It needs to be emphasized that not only did a number of chairs and presidents of Polish specialist societies dignify the celebrations and give their lectures, but also Przemysław Gluziński, a grandson of the founder of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine, i.e., Władysław Antoni Gluziński, participated in the opening of the 1st Gala of the Polish Internal Medicine. After many years of efforts, Poland was officially allowed to organize the General Meeting of the European Federation of Internal Medicine, which was the first meeting ever to have taken place in the Central and Eastern Europe. This special event was held in Katowice (2006) and was followed the next day by the Second European Day of Internal Medicine in Cracow. The ceremonious dinner party organized on this occasion was dignified by presidents of societies of internal medicine from 41 countries, including the Royal College of Physicians of London and the American College of Physicians. The Executive Committee of the International Society of Internal Medicine and five former presidents of this organization as well as the Executive Committee of the European Federation of Internal Medicine together with its six former presidents marked their presence at dinner. Prominent and acknowledged internists from all over the world were invited to Katowice, and had it not been for Professor Kucharz's personal acquaintances, the majority would not have accepted the invitation. Therefore, Poland was honored to host, among others, Walter Siegenthaler, Carol Black, Akihito Igata, Teh-Hong Wang, Ivan Đuriš, Mordehai Ravid, Rudolf de Châtel, and many other outstanding figures.

At the next World Congress of Internal Medicine, held in Taipei, the Meeting in Katowice was described as the most important internal medicine event of the past years. On Professor's own initiative, a Centenary Medal of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine was made and presented to distinguished Polish and international internists. One of the goals of the celebrations was to demonstrate that Polish internal medicine was created and managed by excellent doctors regardless of their main occupation area, i.e., whether they were distinguished scientists, authors of handbooks or meritorious practitioners working outside academic institutes. Another goal was the integration of internal medicine doctors. On the 2nd European Day of Internal Medicine, the Professor presented a lecture on the Polish scientists' contribution to the development of internal medical science made over the centuries. Furthermore, it is necessary to mention that, in 1994, Professor designed an emblem of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine, which is still in use at present, and also authored an emblem of the centenary celebrations.

Professor Kucharz is a member of the Polish Society of Rheumatology. In 2002, he was elected to the Executive Board of which he has been a valid member to this day, and acted as vice-president of the Silesian Division for 10 consecutive years (2001–2011). In 2011, he was re-elected for the 2014–2017 term. He was a member of science committees of rheumatological congresses held in Wrocław, Poznań, Warszawa, and Mikołajki. In 2010, he organized a meeting for presidents of rheumatologic societies from the Central and Eastern Europe, dignified by Laszlo Czirjak, the EULAR Secretary General.

Numerous activities of Eugene J. Kucharz include participation in the Annual European Congresses of Rheumatology since 1999, organization of three Colloquium Rheumatologorum Silesiae meetings (Katowice, 2004, 2005, and 2009), and a membership of the committee issuing therapeutic-treatment recommendations of the Polish Society of Rheumatology. Since 2005, he has also been chairing the Rheumatology Accreditation Committee. He received a professional rheumatologic training in Vienna, Budapest, York, and Toronto. He presented lectures at the 1st and 2nd Inflammation Forum (Antalya, 2010; Sankt Petersburg, 2011) and is a member of this conference scientific committee. Since 2004, he has been actively participating in the studies of the European Group on Systemic Sclerosis EUSTAR, i.e., European League Against Rheumatism Scleroderma Trials and Research. He has taken part in EUSTAR's meetings on a number of occasions, for the most part in Florence. In 2010, he was invited to give a lecture at the 1st Ukrainian-Polish Rheumatological Forum (Kiev, 2011) and contributed to works of a European group Fit-for-Work (Brussels, 2011).

Professor Kucharz has been attending to the University's activities and issues for a very

long time. His activities included not only representing academics in the senate (1978–1980), but also presiding over the Library Committee (1982–1986) and performing associate dean's duties at the Faculty of Medicine in Katowice (1991–1993). Since 1995, he has been participating in arrangements for English medical program teaching at the Medical University of Silesia; he was a representative of the Rector for English medical program from 1995 to 1999, and, subsequently, fulfilled the duties of a deputy dean for English medical program for the period of 2 terms (1999–2005). During this time, he made a significant contribution to the development of this program by participating in the recruitment process on a number of occasions, or by obtaining proper accreditation for the University. As a member of the Association of Medical Colleges, Professor Kucharz attended and was active at the meetings of this group. He was also awarded with commemorative badges by the Hope Medical Institute and the American Student Association.

Eugene J. Kucharz's scientific pursuit has been recognized and acknowledged. In 2000, he was the first Pole to become Fellow of the American College of Physicians. In recognition of the outstanding achievements, the many prizes and distinctions include, among others, the Golden and Bronze Crosses of Merit, the Medal of the National Education Commission, the Golden and Silver Medal of Merit for the Silesian Region, Bruno Nowakowski Prize, two individual Scientific Prizes of the Health Minister (1992, 1993), the Medal of Palecki University in Olomuniec (1997), Laurel of the Medical University of Silesia (1998), the Medal of the University in Udine (1998), the Medal of the Serbian Medical Society (1999), the Medal of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine (1995), the Centenary Medal of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine (2006), the Medal of the Polish Society of Hematologists and Transfusiologists (2006), Rostek's Medal of the Silesian Division of the Polish Medical Society (2006), the Centenary Medal of the Russian Scientific Society of Internal Medicine (2009), the Medal of the Cardiology Institute of Jagiellonian University Medical College (2010), the Medal of the Polish Society of Rheumatology (2010), the Prize of the Elamed Publishing House "Higher Level" (2007), and the title of the "Ambassador of Polish Congresses" (2007). The papers he presented received broad acclaim and earned him numerous prizes, including the prize of the President of the Polish Society of Rheumatology (2008) and a diploma of the Editorial Office of the *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine* (Cracow, 2011), at, among others, the 1st Mitteleurope-Countries Meeting on Internal Medicine (Grado, 1996), Spring Conference on Clinical Pharmacy (Reykjavik, 2000), the 36th Congress of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine (Warsaw, 2008), and the 31st World Congress of Internal Medicine (Melbourne, 2010).

For several years, Professor Kucharz was particularly interested in the Esperanto language. He was

a member of the Medical Section of the Polish Esperanto Association and, in 1984, he published a two-volume seven-language medical dictionary consisting of terms in Esperanto, *Malgranda Medicina Vortaro* (A Short Medical Dictionary). On two occasions, he participated at the congresses of Internacia Medicina Esperanto Konferenco (Internacia Medicina Esperanto Asocio) (Hódmezővásárhely, 1979; Ruse, 1981), and authored a number of scientific publications in Esperanto, which earned him the Zamenhof Medal and an Internacia Esperanto Medicina Asocio prize.

Professor Eugene J. Kucharz manifested interest in journalism as early as the first years at the University. He used to contribute to the *Nowy Medyk* (*The New Medical Student*), and published not only coverage reports and interviews, but also editorial reviews, articles, and columns. He cooperated with the magazine for many years. His journalistic activity was much appreciated and earned him a number of editorial prizes. It is also necessary to emphasize that he was a vice-president of the editorial office division in Katowice, and worked as one of the editors of the *Medical Student and Medicine* (*Medyk i Medycyna*) supplement. He co-organized the National Conference of Medical Student-Journalists in Ustroń (1977). Furthermore, he used to make contributions to other magazines such as *It'd.* (*Etc.*), *Smar* (*Studencki Magazyn Reporterski*, *Student Journal of Reportage*), or *Służba Zdrowia* (*The Health Service*). What is more, he edited a one-off release *Wiwisekcja* (*Vivisection*) (1980).

Eugene J. Kucharz put a lot of effort into the initiation and management of a student scientific journal. As a co-organizer of "The Thyroid" International Student Conference in 1973, he was allowed to publish the conference papers in the form of a special issue of a journal established particularly for this purpose under the name of *Annales Societatis Doctrinae Studentium Academiae Medicae Silesiensis* (*Annals of the Student Scientific Society of the Medical University of Silesia*). The efforts to gather a sufficient amount of paper materials and receive permission for printing took almost 2 years during which copies of the journal working version, scheduled to contain awarded papers from the students' scientific conferences, were published. As a result, the first issue of the journal prepared by Professor Kucharz came out as a supplement. In 1976, the Chancellor of the Medical University of Silesia appointed Eugene J. Kucharz as the first editor-in-chief of the journal and, under his editorship, 11 volumes were published. Thanks to Professor Kucharz's efforts, the journal was indexed by the *Chemical Abstracts* (Columbus, Ohio, United States) and the *Referativniy Zhurnal* (Moscow). In 1977, a volume consisting of international papers prepared on the occasion of the international year of fighting rheumatism was published. The mentioned magazine has been coming out at intervals up to this day, and it is essential to emphasize that the first papers of now well-known

academics were printed in *Annales Societatis Doctorinae Studentii*.

In 1974, Professor Kucharz was elected to the Editorial Board of *Problems of the Student Scientific Activity* (*Problemy Studenckiego Ruchu Naukowego*), journal published by the Polish Scientific Publishers' House (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe), which made him the only representative of medical universities in the Board. He continued to represent universities until 1978.

Additionally, Eugene J. Kucharz has published his journalistic articles in international magazines. One of his texts about the Polish medical student scientific activity published in the *World Student News* is available in English, French, German, and Spanish. He wrote in Esperanto (*Heroldo de Esperanto*, Madrid) and in English (inter alia, *IPSF Bulletin*). Even today, whenever time allows, he reaches out for his pen and writes commentaries and remarks on different aspects of our reality which are then published in medical journals.

Accounts of meetings, conferences, training courses, etc. constitute a significant part of Professor Kucharz's journalistic activity. Not only do these reports record the presented lectures, but also introduce discussion and information on accompanying events. After years, they seem to be the only traces and documents of various scientific achievements. As early as his first years as a medical student, Eugene J. Kucharz has been publishing reports of which many came out in the *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine* (*Polskie Archiwum Medycyny Wewnętrznej*) and *Rheumatology* (*Reumatologia*). His comprehensive reports published abroad deserve a note as well because they play an essential role in promoting Polish scientific associations. As early as 1977, in the *Connective Tissue Research* journal, his reports of the conferences of Polish biochemists' studies on collagen and other components of connective tissue were published. It was, at the time, the only mention of Polish scientists' activity in this field available in international literature, particularly when considering that publication of Polish reports in American scientific journals was highly unusual during that period. Professor Kucharz's reports have been coming out in the *European Journal of Medicine* for many years.

Professor Eugene J. Kucharz's literary interests go far beyond journalism. In the 1980's, he would publish poems in English, which he considers now a "youth adventure"; nevertheless, it is essential to emphasize that "My Silesia" poem (1987) received an honorary mention from the American Poetry Association, and, together with his other poems, was printed in several American poetic anthologies, whereas another of his poems was included in the *Anthology of American Poetry* (1987). Furthermore, he published his poems in English in the Union Mondiaie des Ecrivains Médecins journal entitled *Musa Medica*. He also produced a number of poems in Polish and published them in two booklets: *Elapsing of Days* ("Dni przemijanie", 1988) and *Mysterious River of Time*

("Niepojęta rzeka czasu", 1993). Since then, he has not resumed writing poems although, in 2008, his English translations of poetic songs by Andrzej Sikorowski were published ("and it's our power that we are able to dream").

In his leisure time, much restricted due to numerous professional activities, he reads and travels. Eugene J. Kucharz enjoys reading non-fiction, biographies, diaries, also historic works, and poetry in the original language of their authors. When traveling, he seeks forgotten places and Polish traces. He always tries to be well prepared for the sightseeing and hardly chooses package holidays. So far, he has traversed all the continents and visited all of the European countries. What remains of some trips are articles (published, among others, in the *Pro Medico*) as well as the first Faroe Islands guidebook in Polish, which he published in 2002.

The 1970s rock music, including Czerwone Gitary, Czesław Niemen, Skaldowie, but also the Beatles, is of great sentimental value to Professor Kucharz. Occasionally, he goes to concerts (inter alia, The Rolling Stones, Warsaw, 25th July 2007; U2, Chorzów, 5th July 2005, and Scorpions, Zabrze, 6th December 2009) which bring back memories of youth.

Eugene J. Kucharz is a man of many passions; however, it is his daughter Patricia, now a student, who is the greatest meaning and happiness of his life. Those close to him know that their father-daughter relation is based on strong and deep friendship.

Despite his unquestionable achievements, Professor Kucharz remains a modest and kind man. He is hard-working, enjoys his friends' company, but always works in solitude. He possesses the ability of comprehensive analysis of problems, both scientific and diagnostic ones, but also distinguishes himself by creativity and eagerness to tackle nonstandard topics.

Our Dear Professor, on the occasion of your jubilee and on behalf of all your friends, we wish you both happiness and health for all the days to come spent among friends and well-wishers, and successful realization of all, not only scientific, plans.