

# In memoriam: Professor Andrzej Trzebski

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Andrzej Trzebski (FIGURE 1) died on July 5, 2017, at the age of 89. He was born and grew up in Warsaw. He attended medical school at the Warsaw Academy of Medicine. As a young doctor, he was fascinated by physiology, and in 1952, he took position at the Department of Human Physiology, where he spent a substantial part of his career working with a prominent Polish physiologist, Professor Franciszek Czubalski. In 1967, Professor Trzebski was appointed chair of the Department of Human Physiology and held the position until 1998. In 1978, he became director of the Institute of Physiological Sciences at the Warsaw Academy of Medicine, which at that time developed into a leading interdisciplinary center dealing with research on physiology in Poland.

Andrzej Trzebski and his team had changed the landscape dealing with research on physiology in Poland. The list of researchers who worked and published with Professor Trzebski includes numerous renowned names, such as Janusz Lipski, Jacek Przybylski, Małgorzata Tafil-Klawe, Paweł Szulczyk, and Stanisław Majcherczyk. Several decades of research resulted in a stream of original papers that contributed to a better understanding of the role of arterial chemoreceptors and other components of cardiovascular system regulation.

Professor Trzebski was also a gifted educator and mentor, who would always provide his students and junior colleagues with generous advice and support. His capacity to nurture the talents of young investigators was limitless, and he was particularly attentive to developing their interest in the pathophysiological mechanisms of the cardiovascular system. He inspired numerous researchers to pursue a scientific career in the field, and his inquisitive mind, deep understanding of physiology, and keen insights led him to breakthrough discoveries.

His key contribution was the hypothesis that the neurogenic mechanisms of cardiovascular and respiratory system regulation should be considered as one functional entity. He also proposed a fascinating hypothesis that arterial chemoreceptor reflex contributes to functional mechanisms of essential hypertension. The following



**FIGURE 1** Professor Andrzej Trzebski at his office in 1998 (photograph courtesy of the Medical University of Warsaw)

excerpt from his editorial published in *Hypertension* in 1992 nicely summarizes his enlightening ideas: “Arterial chemoreceptors are oxygen sensors unique in the sense of initiating integrated respiratory and autonomic nervous system circulatory adjustments to subserve this priority [to maintain an optimal tissue oxygen tension]. Such an integrative approach to hypertension is still at the beginning stage. Isolated results have not been interconnected by documented functional links, and many relations remain hypothetical. Yet, this new avenue may provide useful information on the mechanisms of hypertension.”<sup>1</sup>

Andrzej Trzebski contributed to numerous organizations, but he will probably be best remembered as president of the International Society of Arterial Chemoreception, member of International Union of Physiological Sciences, and honorary member of the Polish Society of Physiology. In the years 1972–1975, he was the dean of the Medical Faculty, and in the years 1981–1984, deputy rector for sciences at the Warsaw Academy of Medicine. He was also a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Polish Academy of Arts

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**FIGURE 2** Professor Andrzej Trzebski during the ceremony of awarding the title of Doctor Honoris Causa of Jagiellonian University in Kraków, 2000 (photograph courtesy of the Medical University of Warsaw)

and Sciences. He had an impressive collection of prestigious awards from a wide range of international societies. He was also decorated with the Gold Cross of Merit and the Order of Polonia Restituta (Knight's Cross and Commander's Cross). In 2000, he received Doctor Honoris Causa degree of Jagiellonian University in Kraków (FIGURE 2). In 2016, he obtained a life-achievement award of the Polish Society of Hypertension.

On the personal level, Professor Trzebski would always impress people with his powerful intellect, inquisitive mind, deep insights, and critical thinking. Almost every discussion with him was a wonderful learning experience, as he would typically end up talking about science, exploring a wide range of topics related to basic cardiovascular physiology and hypertension.

Andrzej Trzebski was a creative thinker, brilliant speaker, and a meticulous writer and editor. He was precise in interpreting scientific data and always formulated clear conclusions. Every word had to do its job, every sentence had to make a decisive statement, and his final words had to tell the essence of the story. He will be always remembered as a visionary scientist with an uncompromising attitude to research. He was a world-renowned scientist, with reputation as a pioneer and leader in the field of physiology extending far beyond the borders of Poland.

## REFERENCES

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