

Professor Tadeusz Orłowski – the founder of Polish nephrology

Franciszek Kokot

Department of Nephrology, Endocrinology and Metabolic Diseases, Medical University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland

It is by no means easy to characterize a person who devoted over 60 years of his life to patients, scientific research, education of medical personnel, as well as social and organizational activities. Professor Tadeusz Orłowski – the son of Witold Orłowski, one of the greatest Polish specialists in internal medicine – was born on September 13, 1917 in Kazań. He studied at the underground Faculty of Medicine at the Józef Piłsudski University in Warsaw. During World War II he was an active member of the resistance movement. He graduated in 1943 and began his career as a researcher and a teacher at the Medical Faculty of the University of Warsaw (1943–1948) and later at Medical Academy in Warsaw (1948–1987). He went through all stages of a medical career, holding positions of a junior and a senior academic staff member (1943–1944 and 1945–1948, respectively), an assistant, an associate professor to ultimately become a professor. In 1963, he became the head of the First Department of General Internal Medicine at the Medical Academy in Warsaw and held the position until he founded the Transplantation Institute in 1975, which he ran until retirement in 1987. From 1988 until the end of his life he was a contract professor at the Institute of Biocybernetics and Biomedical Engineering at the Polish Academy of Sciences (Polska Akademia Nauk – PAN).

In the years 1952–1954 he was the head of one of the divisions of the Scientific Institute of Physical Culture which later became part of the Józef Piłsudski University of Physical Education in Warsaw. From 1954 to 1955 he was in charge of the Polish Red Cross hospital in Hyn-Nam and Ham-Hyn in Democratic People's Republic of Korea. He spent the years 1959–1960 on the Rockefeller Foundation scholarship at the Washington University in St. Louis. In 1964, he was appointed an associate member, and in 1971 he became a full member of the PAN. From 1961 to 1963 he was a research worker and from 1969 to 1971 a secretary in the Division of Medical Sciences of the PAN.

From 1963 to 1994 he was the editor-in-chief of the *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine*. As the first deputy scientific secretary of the PAN (1972–1980) he helped to establish links with international scientific groups. Professor Orłowski took an active part in the organization of the First Congress of Polish Science. For several years he was the secretary of the Committee of National Awards, and the chairman of the Nephrological Commission of the Clinical Pathophysiology Committee at the PAN. The meetings of the Commission stimulated innovations in the field of nephrology and transplantology.

Professor Orłowski's scientific achievements are outstanding. He is the author of more than 400 scientific papers published in national and international, prestigious European and American journals. He wrote numerous chapters on nephrology and internal diseases in medical textbooks. His original papers deal with various aspects of general internal medicine, clinical biochemistry, pathophysiology, nephrology, transplantology and dialysis therapy. He devoted the last 11 years of his life to conduct research on the isolation and transplantation of Langerhans islets. Results of his scientific work were presented at a number of congresses and received widespread recognition. His high-ranking position in nephrology and transplantology earned him a membership in the Board of the European Dialysis and Transplant Association (1966–1968) and International Nephrology Society (1974–1976). He was the honorary member of several associations and academies including the Polish-American Medical Society, New York Academy of Sciences, Polish Medical Alliance, Polish Society of Internal Medicine, Polish Immunological Society, Polish Nephrology Society, Polish Medical Association, Hungarian Academy of Sciences and many more. He was a foreign member of the German Nephrology Society. Professor Orłowski was awarded the honorary degree of *Doctor Honoris Causa* by numerous Polish universities including

Prof. Franciszek Kokot, MD, PhD,
Department of Nephrology,
Endocrinology and Metabolic
Diseases, Medical University
of Silesia, Katowice, Poland
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Medical Academy in Warsaw and the Jagiellonian University in Kraków.

Professor Orłowski was also a great university teacher. He was the supervisor of several dozen doctoral theses and 21 postdoctoral programs. Seventeen assistants obtained PhD degrees under his supervision. Dozens of physicians became specialists in general internal medicine, nephrology and transplantology having professor Orłowski as a mentor at the Transplantation Institute. Professor Orłowski and Professor Nielubowicz were granted the II° National Award for outstanding achievements in renal transplantology.

Professor Orłowski was the national consultant in nephrology and transplantology in Poland for many years. He was also a member of boards of several national and international journals, and he served as editor-in-chief of the *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine*.

Professor Orłowski was a distinguished figure not only in the history of Polish nephrology but in Polish medicine in general. He devoted the entire life to patients, science, medical students and coworkers, successfully overcoming obstacles and difficulties on the way to achieving his goals. He was widely admired for his diligence, reliability, honesty and his courage of taking an uncompromising stance in noble causes.

Professor Orłowski's death filled the whole Polish nephrology community with deep grief.