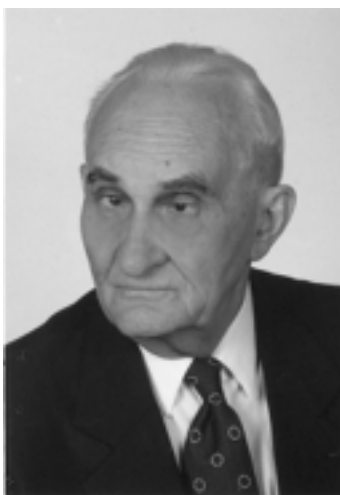


Professor Józef Niweliński (1920–2010)

The Polish histochemical community lost a meritorious member, when Prof. Józef Niweliński passed away in Kraków on May 16, 2010.

Professor Niweliński has been acknowledged as playing a significant role in the community of Polish histochemists and cell biologists. He belonged to leading group of scientists promoting the development of histochemistry and cytochemistry in Poland in the second half of the last century and this brought about the creation, in 1961, of the Polish Histochemical and Cytochemical Society. His most important contribution to the Society were his efforts which resulted in appearing in 1963 of the scientific quarterly *Folia Histochemica et Cytochemica*. He was its editor in chief for 15 years and introduced the journal to *Current Contents*.

Józef Niweliński was born in Zakopane on November 25, 1920 as son of Aleksander, a high school master, and Emilia, whose maiden name was Łojewski. He was educated in Kraków, attending the King Jan III Sobieski Memorial High School and then the Jagiellonian University. His exceptional ability led to his being proficient in a number of languages, and he utilized this facility during World War II when he taught English in the secret J. Dietl Memorial High School in Kraków. After the war, he came back to study at the Pharmaceutical Faculty of Jagiellonian University, qualifying in 1947 as a Master of Pharmacy. Subsequently, studying in the university's biology faculty, he obtained in 1952 the title Master of Biology. He was engaged in biological sciences and research working in the Department of Biology and Embryology at Jagiellonian University (1947–1951) and in the Department of Experimental Zoology working in of the Polish Academy of Sciences (1953–1962). In 1954, he presented his thesis and was awarded a doctor's degree from the Pharmaceutical Faculty of the University, and in the period 1955–1962 he was employed at the docent position.



In 1962, he returned to the Pharmaceutical Faculty, by now affiliated to the Academy of Medicine, where at first he was engaged in the Department of Biology. Later, he chaired a biological unit which changed its structure and name several times: from 1986 until his retirement in 1991, it was called the Department of Cytobiology and Histochemistry of the Academy of Medicine. In 1974 he was distinguished with the title of Professor.

In 1958, Prof. Niweliński received a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship, funding a year's stay at the Department of Histochemistry of the Royal

Postgraduate Medical School in London, which was chaired by one of Europe's leading histochemists, A.G.E. Pearse. In Pearse's laboratory, he entered deeply into the problems of histochemistry, especially into histochemical techniques demonstrating the activity of oxidative enzymes.

Niweliński's scientific output includes papers reporting the results of experimental studies on various animal species and also on the human placenta affected by noxious environmental agents. His experiments for his doctoral thesis were connected to the problems of the thiomethyluracil derivative effects on the thyroid gland in rabbits. A number of experiments he devoted to the role of multicellular adipose tissue in hibernation, and also to problems of steroidogenesis and spermatogenesis in mammals. He considered experimentally problems relating to the regeneration of limbs and the myocardium in amphibians. Using histochemical methods, he considered problems of endocrine glands, including aspects of comparative endocrinology and congenital metabolic diseases. Essential parts of his papers were devoted to oxidative enzymes in the human placenta.

He utilized histochemical reaction on dehydrogenases in evaluating placenta function in respect of environmental agents influencing pregnant women. He carried out extensive work comparing placentas obtained from hospitals after birth from women liv-

ing in the industrial Silesia district and the vicinity of Kraków to those from women living in non-polluted regions of the Bieszczady mountains. The differences in the oxidative enzyme activity patterns and placental histology proved that placentas, and thus fetal development, may be influenced by environmental agents. These findings, in the 1970s, were part of the reason why a commission of the Polish Academy of Sciences suggested that aluminum works in Skawina near Kraków should be closed. Prof. Niweliński presented a statement concerning the environmental effects on the human placenta and fetus at the Congress on Environmental Preservation in Adana, and in 1988 at the International Histochemical Symposium in Varna. Further studies into these problems were continued in his laboratory by researchers preparing their doctoral theses.

Considering the Niweliński's performance we, the undersigned, feel obliged to mention one more person: his close coworker, Doctor Lucyna Zamorska (1938–2007). Doctor Zamorska was his coworker in research and coauthor of several published papers. She was managing editor of *Folia Histochemica et Cytochemica* and was responsible in large part for the elevated status of the journal. Moreover, along with Prof. Niweliński, she received the J. Śniadecki's Medal in recognition of the editorial level of *Folia*. When Prof. Niweliński retired, Dr. Zamorska chaired the Department of Cytobiology and Histochemistry, until her own retirement in 2003. The Polish histochemical community expresses its great appreciation for everything she did for histochemistry in this country and, in particular, for the Polish Histochemical and Cytochemical Society.

Professor Niweliński was also deeply engaged in the organization of scientific and academic life. Besides performing an academic function in his medical school, and promoting research by his students and coworkers, he was an active member of local and international scientific societies and institutions. Apart from the Polish Histochemical and Cytochemical Society, he was a member of the Polish N. Co-

pernicus Memorial Society of Naturalists, the Polish Pharmaceutical Society, the Kraków Medical Society, the Polish Genetic Society and the New York Academy of Science. The most worthy of mention is, however, his scientific and professional service as associate editor of *Folia Biologica* (1952–1962) and thereafter as editor in chief of *Folia Histochemica et Cytochemica*.

Professor Niweliński was honored by distinctions, awards and honorary memberships from scientific institutions and societies, social societies and state authorities. He received honorary membership of the Medical Society of Kraków and the Polish Histochemical and Cytochemical Society (1986). In appreciation of his merits, the Polish Medical Association (1999) and the Polish Histochemical and Cytochemical Society (2001) awarded him the title *Bene Meritus*. He was also honored by receiving an award from the Cambridge Biogeographical Institute (1994) and the Ignacy Łukasiewicz Memorial Medal (1997). The Polish state authorities decorated him with the Polonia Restituta Officer's Cross (1986), and in the same year, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Polish Histochemical and Cytochemical Society, the Polish Academy of Sciences decorated him with the prestigious J. Śniadecki's Medal for both founding and acting as the long-term editor in chief of *Folia Histochemica et Cytochemica*.

In addition, Prof. Niweliński's widespread engagement in non-scientific activity should be mentioned. He was an enthusiastic canoeist and mountain walker, being an active member of the Tatra Mountains Society and member of the Friends of Vilnius District Association.

Summarizing the life, work and personality of Prof. Niweliński, the undersigned would like to express, on behalf of the Polish histochemical community, our appreciation and great thanks to him, primarily for the significant investment he made in terms of the contribution of Polish histochemists to the development of science, above all by creating and editing the histochemical quarterly of international standard still published today as *Folia Histochemica et Cytochemica*.

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