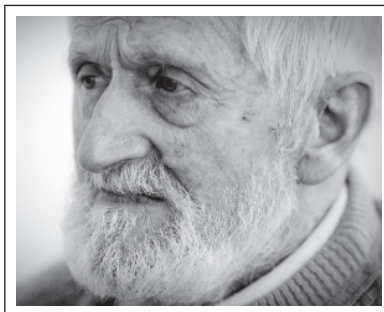


Professor Zygmunt Urbanowicz (1931–2011) — biography

Professor Zygmunt Urbanowicz was born on 18 February 1931 in Wołkowysk (now Belarus). In the years 1949 to 1954 he studied medicine at the Medical Faculty of Mariae Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin (now the Medical University of Lublin).



Professor Urbanowicz began his research and academic career during his medical studies, and in 1950 he became a junior assistant in the Human Anatomy Department. Having received his diploma, thanks to the recommendation of the doyen of Polish anatomists Prof. Mieczysław Stelmasiak (1909–1982), he was offered the post of assistant (1954) and then senior assistant (1955). Soon after, he became a lecturer (1963), senior lecturer (1975), and finally an associate (1984) and ordinary professor (1996).

Professor Urbanowicz also worked at the Second Department of Internal Medicine and, after its reorganisation, at the Department of Gastroenterology. In 1958 he obtained the first, and in 1964 the second degree of internal medicine.

In 1963 Prof. Urbanowicz finished doctoral thesis entitled *The interconnections of musculo-cutaneous, median, and ulnar nerves in Macacus rhesus* and received PhD under Prof. Stelmasiak. In 1973, due to his scientific output and the dissertation entitled *The structure of the genitofemoral nerve in postnatal life in man*, he was honoured as a Habilitation Doctor.

His organisational skills elevated him to the position of Deputy Director of the Biological-Morphological Institute in 1975. In the years 1979 to 1984 the Professor was also Chief of the Human Anatomy Department at the Medical Academy of Lublin.

Professor Urbanowicz always showed an exceptionally great deal of interest in angiology, embryology, and neuroanatomy. His scientific achievements

include 66 original papers published in various Polish and international medical journals. Due to his excellent handling of labour-intensive morphological techniques, together with preparation performed with clockwork precision, profound knowledge of ana-

tomy, embryology, and histology as well as an extreme exploratory passion he was able to demonstrate many variations of the brachial and lumbar-sacral plexuses, their branches, including course and anastomoses, as well as the scope of innervation with reference to the symmetry and differences resulting from gender and age. Professor Urbanowicz was also the author of numerous publications on peripheral nerve histology. It should be noted that all his findings were compared with specific anthropomorphic features, which made them possible to implement the results in clinical practice. His research on angiology focused on the evaluation of blood vessels in the lower limbs of primates, as well as the morphology of cardiac veins and small circulation in human.

One of his greatest scientific and organisational achievements was undoubtedly setting up the Experimental Teratology Unit. This thriving research station was one of three centres in Poland, which conducted scientific work on the prenatal toxicity of various xenobiotics. However, these days the Laboratory has lost its autonomy and has become part of the Human Anatomy Department. It should be emphasised that Prof. Urbanowicz trained a substantial number of researchers, who worked side by side with him and continue his studies into teratology, as well as histo- and morphogenesis.

Professor Urbanowicz supervised ten doctoral theses and two habilitation dissertations. His unquestionable achievements include training a staggering number of medical doctors. Since the beginning of

career he was extremely active and soon became an acknowledged academic teacher. He conducted classes in human anatomy for medical and dental students as well as for many paramedical faculties. His openness and devotion won him popularity among students. This was reflected in the warm Polish nickname he was given — *Dobrodziej* (Squire — a good man). His colleagues from other scientific centres were also familiar with this nickname and used it gladly.

In the later years of his professional career his passion for propagating anatomical knowledge was vented in the form of publishing new books. The most important achievements in this area include:

- *Dictionary of International Anatomical Terminology* (UMCS Publishing House, 1997);
- *Basics of Human Anatomy* (Czelej, 2002);
- *Contemporary Anatomical Terminology* (Czelej, 2002);
- *A Small Encyclopaedia of Human Anatomy* (Czelej, 2002);
- *Human Anatomy — Encyclopaedic Dictionary* (MORPOL, 2000);
- *Handy Dictionary of Anatomical Terms* (Czelej, 2004).

His work, devotion to science and didactics, and his impressive and indomitable propagation of knowledge among students and colleagues brought Prof. Urbanowicz many honours and awards. On numerous occasions His Magnificence the Rector of the Medical Academy in Lublin, many organisations and governmental institutions rewarded the honourable scholar. He was bestowed with the Gold Merit Cross, the Cross of Rebirth of Poland, and the Medal of the National Education Commission to name but a few.

The Lublin Scientific Society bestowed Prof. Urbanowicz with the Lublin Scientific Award (known as the Lublin Nobel Prize) for his *Human Anatomy — Encyclopaedic Dictionary*.

This biography would not be complete without mentioning his wide spectrum of socio-organisational activities. Professor Urbanowicz was first Deputy and then President of the Lublin Division of the Polish Anatomical Society, as well as an active organizer of two Congresses of the Polish Anatomical Society. His charity work also must not be forgotten. Professor provided substantial sums to support outstandingly talented students from Belarus and various Catholic Church organisations.

All the facts presented above clearly show that Professor Zygmunt Urbanowicz was wholeheartedly devoted to anatomy and Polish science. He was a sincere and amiable person, highly respected by his colleagues and students. A man of exceptional esteem, erudite yet exceptionally modest. The Professor was an extraordinary person, who will be sorely missed and long remembered.

Professor Zygmunt Urbanowicz passed away on 9 April 2011 in Lublin and his body was laid in Lublin's Cemetery in Lipowa Street. His family, colleagues, co-workers, pupils, as well as large group of former and present students for whom the Professor was a living legend of the Medical University of Lublin, accompanied him during his last journey.

Acknowledgements

The above picture is provided by Jakub Adamczuk — one of the persons who were with the Professor in his last days. Thank you very much for your help, your heart, and your cooperation.

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