

## Professor Stanisław Pasyk (1931–2020)

Andrzej Lekston<sup>1</sup>, Zbigniew Kalarus<sup>2</sup>, Mariusz Gąsior<sup>1</sup>, Lech Poloński<sup>1</sup>; on behalf of the teams of cardiology departments and cardiology laboratories of the Silesian Center for Heart Diseases in Zabrze

<sup>1</sup> 3rd Chair and Department of Cardiology, Medical University of Silesia in Katowice, School of Medicine with the Division of Dentistry in Zabrze, Silesian Center for Heart Diseases, Zabrze, Poland

<sup>2</sup> Department of Cardiology, Congenital Heart Diseases and Electrotherapy, Silesian Center for Heart Diseases, Zabrze, Poland



**FIGURE 1** Professor Stanisław Pasyk (1990), an excellent physician, long-term director of the Provincial Cardiology Centre in Zabrze (currently known as the Silesian Centre for Heart Diseases), pioneer of modern cardiology, died on August 4, 2020. Silesian cardiology community remembers and pays their respects to Professor Pasyk. Photo courtesy of Silesian Center for Heart Diseases.

### Correspondence to:

Andrzej Lekston, MD, PhD, 3rd Chair and Department of Cardiology, Medical University of Silesia in Katowice, School of Medicine with the Division of Dentistry in Zabrze, Silesian Center for Heart Diseases, ul. Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej 9, 41-800 Zabrze, Poland, phone: +48 32 373 36 00, email: a.Lekston@sccs.pl

Received: January 13, 2021.

Accepted: January 14, 2021.

Published online: January 25, 2021.

Kardiologia Pol. 2021; 79 (1): 106-108

doi:10.33963/KP.15774

Copyright by the Author(s), 2021

*The measure of a man's life are his accomplishments.*

Professor Stanisław Pasyk (FIGURE 1) is warmly remembered by successive generations of physicians, nurses, physiotherapists, medical technicians, laboratory diagnosticians, and other staff members of the cardiac center in Zabrze. He was not only as a charismatic visionary who created practically from the ground up a tertiary cardiology center (nowadays recognized both in Poland and Europe) but most of all as a physician with all his heart devoted to his patients.

He was born in Zamieść on August 16, 1931. He graduated from the Medical Academy in

Kraków in 1954. In 1964, he obtained the title of doctor of philosophy, in 1973, he was conferred the habilitation degree, and in 1985, was awarded the title of a professor.

In 1954, Dr Stanisław Pasyk started work at the Department of Internal Medicine of the Medical Academy in Kraków, which was led by Professor Leon Tochowicz. His medical interests were related to the experimental part of interventional cardiology.

In 1960, having received a scholarship from the National Institute of Health in the United States, he went abroad to continue his education as a research fellow at the Harvard Medical School in Boston. He completed his postdoctoral studies in the field of cardiovascular diseases, passed all the exams, and met all the requirements necessary for this specialty under the supervision of world-famous Professor P. D. White and Professor E. F. Bland. During his stay, under the supervision of Professor Herman L. Blumgart and Professor Paul M. Zool, he began his research on the coronary circulation in myocardial infarction.

In 1962, he became the Head of the Central Interdepartmental Catheterization Laboratory in Kraków. He left for the United States again in 1967, to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC. During this stay, he continued and completed his education in the field of clinical and experimental cardiology.

After his return to Poland, he started working in the Institute of Pediatrics in Kraków. He was chosen to organize and then manage the Independent Cardiac Diagnostics Laboratory.

In years 1973 to 1975, he was appointed Professor at the Max Planck Institute in Bad Nauheim, at the Faculty of Clinical and Experimental Cardiology, where he continued his work in clinical and experimental cardiology.

The obtained results have led to significant progress in the understanding of the physiopathology of myocardial infarction and formed a basis for the bold initiative that he carried out in Zabrze in the following years.

In this matter, he was ahead of his time!

In 1976, after the death of Professor Adam Wolański (who was a founder of the Provincial Cardiology Centre in 1972, at 10 M. Curie-Skłodowska Street, Zabrze), Associate Professor Stanisław Pasyk took over the management of the cardiology department and became the director of the said cardiac center. One of the first organizational decisions of Stanisław Pasyk in 1976 was to launch a proper cardiac catheterization laboratory—the first in Silesia and the third in Poland (after Kraków and Warsaw).

In the following year (1977), a cardiac ambulance started to operate. This was the key organizational decision which allowed to provide medical assistance to patients with cardiovascular diseases, especially those with acute coronary syndromes.

In 1979, and then again in 1980 to 1981, Professor Pasyk went abroad to conduct research at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, United States. In 1981, he was invited by the University of Michigan to lead research at the Division of Cardiology as a visiting scientist, member of Cardiology Division Management Board, member of the University Faculty Council, as well as a director of the Research Laboratory for Cardiovascular Diseases, ran at the Division of Cardiology of the University of Michigan Medical School.

In 1983, after another return from the United States, the Governor of Katowice Province, Roman Paszkowski and the Rector of the Silesian Medical Academy Professor Franciszek Kokot invited Professor Stanisław Pasyk to create a new hospital in Zabrze based in a new unfinished building located at 2 Szpitalna Street. On October 1, 1983, Professor Pasyk became the director of the new facility and the head of its Cardiology Department. He offered the position of the head of the Department of Cardiac Surgery to Associate Professor Zbigniew Religa.

It was the initiative of Professor Pasyk to launch in Zabrze, as early as in 1987, a 24-hour on-call program of interventional treatment of myocardial infarction (the first in Poland and the second in Europe), which is absolutely fundamental in the modern treatment of this disease. Patients and physicians were no longer helpless in the face of myocardial infarction that could happen around the clock. For many years that followed, that it is until 1999, the on-call program of interventional treatment of myocardial infarction in Zabrze that functioned 24 hours per day, 7 days per week was truly unique in Poland.

At the same time, it should be emphasized that until the 1990s, the invasive treatment

of myocardial infarction was available only in few cardiac centers in the country and abroad. It was not until 2002 that it became the preferred method of treatment recommended by the guidelines of cardiac societies. This fact emphasizes the great innovative significance of the initiative introduced at our center by Professor Pasyk many years earlier.

With all that, the new cardiac center in Zabrze has become one of the best and most revered cardiology hospitals in the country. Professor Pasyk has developed here a broad spectrum of modern cardiology and cardiac surgery based on the state-of-the-art diagnostics and treatment of cardiovascular diseases and conducted a wide range of innovative studies.

From 1961 to 1967, Professor Stanisław Pasyk served as the provincial specialist in cardiology in the Kraków Province, from 1984 to 1991 in the Katowice Province, and in 1987 also in the Opole Province.

He was a member of many scientific societies in the country: Polish Cardiac Society, Polish Medical Association, Polish Society of Internal Medicine, Polish Physiological Society, as well as abroad: European Society of Cardiology, International Society and Federation of Cardiology, American Heart Association, American Physiological Society, New York Academy of Sciences, Paul Dudley White Society (Harvard Medical School, Boston, as a student of Professor P. D. White), being actively involved in their work.

He actively participated in the activities of the Polish Cardiac Society, was the initiator and founding member of its branches in Kraków and Zabrze. Moreover, he was a member of the Scientific Council of the Institute of Cardiology in Warsaw (March 1, 1986–May 17, 1991) and the Committee of Clinical Pathophysiology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw (1987–1992). For his achievements, he was repeatedly awarded and honored in Poland and abroad. In 1998, he was awarded the Commander's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta.

Professor Stanisław Pasyk is an icon not only for cardiologists.

In recognition of his merits, in 2017 cardiologists organized a jubilee conference in Zabrze on the 30th anniversary of the interventional treatment of myocardial infarction. Andrzej Duda, the President of the Republic of Poland, was the guest of honor during the conference in Zabrze: „I am here as the President of the Republic of Poland to say ‘Thank you’ on behalf of Poland and its citizens. For what we have just heard, this great history of Polish cardiology that saves lives, the history of those who struggle to rescue patients, it makes a tremendous impression.... In the 1980s, Professor Pasyk was working in Zabrze. He brought here Professor Zbigniew Religa—because after all this was the course of events. In 1987, the first 24-hour

interventional shift was established here.... I am extremely grateful to you all for bringing Polish cardiology to the level of Western Europe.”

In recognition of his merits, in June 2020, a group of cardiologists applied to the Minister of Health to name the hospital after Professor Stanisław Pasyk and Professor Zbigniew Religa.

#### **ARTICLE INFORMATION**

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST** None declared.

**OPEN ACCESS** This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0), allowing third parties to download articles and share them with others, provided the original work is properly cited, not changed in any way, distributed under the same license, and used for non-commercial purposes only. For commercial use, please contact the journal office at [kardiologiapolska@ptkardio.pl](mailto:kardiologiapolska@ptkardio.pl).

**HOW TO CITE** Lekston A, Kalarus Z, Gašior M, Poloriski L. Professor Stanisław Pasyk (1931–2020). *Kardiol Pol.* 2021; 79: 106-108. doi:10.33963/KP.15774