

In memory of Professor Rościław Kadłubowski

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Professor Rościław Kadłubowski was born on March 21st, 1921, in Kamionka Strumiłłowa, close to Lwów, now Ukraine. He was graduated from Lodz University as a medical doctor in 1949 and earned his Ph.D. two years later. He then became a “candidate of medical sciences”, a title no longer in use, in 1955. He was appointed associate professor in 1960 and full professor in 1980.

As a biological academician, he was most precisely characterized as a parasitologist. I first met him in this capacity when I started my medical studies in 1973. He was famous for his witty and fascinating lectures. Those dealt with general principles of biology and they included some methodology, as well as etology and animal behaviour and, finally, genetics. I loved his lectures and they inspired me to read voraciously Tinbergen and Lorenz but I began with the very old and now outdated books among them “Psychology of animals” and “Psychology of Apes” by Jan Dembowski, which included a chapter I well remember entitled “The psychology of an earthworm”. The old authors who impressed me, however, were Maurice Maeterlinck, a Nobel Prize winner, who wrote “The life of ants”, “The life of termites” and “The life of bees”. In the second semester Prof. Kadłubowski switched to genetics; but did not lecture on molecular genetics. Instead we followed him as he lead us on a difficult path of classical Mendelian and population genetics. He made us solve crosses to give us some insight into distribution of traits. This was easy for me but not for the others. As I listened to those lectures I became convinced that almost all human traits were written in the language of genetics and that the differences among people and populations (I did not dare say “races”) were thus defined.



The students feared him, especially at the final examinations when he examined five people at a time with the same questions that he passed around. Because I was the last in the row I mostly needed only an opportunity to agree or disagree with my colleagues and thus was able to gain the highest grade.

By the time of my second year of studies I became a member of Students' Scientific Society associated with

Department of Biology and Medical Parasitology and I held classes with students in place of Prof. Kadłubowski. I regarded this duty as a privilege. Ultimately my interest changed but I still think that an interaction between the most complex human organ (the brain) and multicellular parasites is one of the most fascinating parts of the neurosciences. Indeed later in my life, I even wrote a few chapters for the Polish textbooks of neurology and neuropathology.

After I finished my studies and, our ways split, I saw Prof. Kadłubowski only rarely. A few years ago, however, I sent him a translation of “Human Molecular Biology” I had done, and he telephoned me to thank me and he added that this was a complex book. That conversation was our last.

He died suddenly under horrifying circumstances, on December 29th, in the 88th year of his life. In death he followed his wife, Prof. Joanna Kadłubowska, a specialist in algae.

Prof. Kadłubowski was among the very few interesting men I have ever met and I owe him my gratitude for an inspiration that has never ceased!

Paweł P. Liberski