



**Professor Zbigniew Stanisław Herman – pharmacologist, physician
(1935–2010)**

OBITUARY

Professor Zbigniew Stanisław Herman, an eminent scientist, who made a great contribution to organization of science and was an unquestioned authority not only for pharmacological community, passed away on May 4, 2010. He belonged to pioneers of development of psychopharmacological studies in our country. From the mid-sixties of the twentieth century, he had actively participated in creation and then development of clinical pharmacology, which became his scientific passion. His scientific achievements were highly valued that was confirmed by the fact that he was included in the list of 150 the most frequently cited Polish scientists in the field of medicine and biology in the period 1965–2005. For 50 years he had been professionally affiliated with the Silesian Medical Academy in Katowice (Medical University of Silesia at present).

Professor Zbigniew S. Herman was born on December 17, 1935 in Thuste in Podole. After The Second World War, he lived with his family in Bytom, where he completed the J. Smoleń High School and Music High School of 1st degree in piano. Music was his passion for the whole life. He graduated from the Silesian Medical Academy, Faculty of Medicine in Zabrze-Rokitnica in 1958.

During the third year of the medical studies, as a fellow of the W. Biegański Foundation, he started to work in the Chair of Pharmacology in Zabrze-Rokitnica headed by Prof. Józef Jeske, and continued his work after graduation. He was promoted there from assistant (1958) to full professor (1986). He was awarded Doctor's degree in 1963 in the Silesian Medical Academy upon presentation of dissertation "The effect of some proatherosclerotic diets on the content of 5-hydroxytryptamine and the activity of some enzymes influencing metabolism of indole amines in pigeons and rats". The study was conducted under supervision of Prof. Tadeusz L. Chruściel. Five years later, when he was 33 years old, he became the acting head of the Chair and Department of Pharmacology in Zabrze-Rokitnica. In the sixties and seventies, he broadened his knowledge in pharmacology in foreign scientific centers: Institute of Pharmacology, Academy of Sciences in Moscow and as a Riker Foundation fellow, in Laboratory of Biochemical Pharmacology, National Institutes of Health in Bethesda. In that famous university, he acquired knowledge of spectrofluorimetric methods of determination of biogenic amines and their metabolites in the rat brain under guidance of Dr.

Bernard B. Brody and Dr. Julius Axelrod, later a Nobel Prize winner. After returning to Poland, he implemented these advanced at that time methods not only in his parent university but also in pharmacological centers in Lublin, Kraków and Warszawa. Since his visit to NIH, he had been interested in psychopharmacological studies, and he had explored this field for many years in the Chair of Pharmacology in Zabrze-Rokitnica. One of his important scientific achievements was development of an original method of injection to lateral brain ventricles in rats (1970) and mice (1963), implementation of which significantly contributed to development of psychopharmacology. That research direction was presented in the dissertation „The effect of psychotropic drugs changing noradrenaline level in the brain and the impact of exogenous noradrenaline on behavior of rats”. Based on this work, he was awarded the title of Dr. hab. in pharmacology. In 1972–1975, as a visiting professor, he had been a guest of the Department of Clinical Pharmacology at the Royal Postgraduate School (Londyn), Karolinska Institute (Sztokholm), Emory University (Atlanta) and Rochester University (New York). Among important scientific achievements in the period when Professor was the head of the Chair of Pharmacology in Zabrze-Rokitnica, he highly valued the studies on contribution of biogenic amines, cyclic nucleotides and enkephalins to the mechanism of action of psychotropic drugs (1970–1985), discovery of tuftsin effect on the brain and corroboration of the hypothesis about the influence of the central nervous system on the immune system (1980).

For almost 20 years after graduation, Professor had combined scientific research and work as a physician in the Third Clinic of Internal Diseases in Bytom headed by Prof. Kornel Gibiński. Such firm scientific and practical background allowed him to obtain specialization of 2nd degree in internal diseases (1965), pharmacology (1970) and clinical pharmacology (1974).

In 1986, Professor was appointed the head of the Chair of Pharmacology, Faculty of Medicine in Katowice which was organized by him and his team. The Chair comprised two units: Department of Experimental Pharmacology and Department of Clinical Pharmacology, the latter headed by Prof. Zbigniew S. Herman. Works of this department focused on the continuation of psychopharmacological studies and on immunopsychopharmacology and clinical pharmacology, dealing mostly with the contribution of inflammatory processes in development of atheroscle-

rotic lesions and with pharmacokinetic studies. Several laboratories were created: isotopic, drug concentration measurements, molecular biology and cell culture. As the head of the Chair in Katowice-Ligota, Professor devoted much effort to the development of clinical pharmacology. In particular, the basis for clinical studies was created, namely, since 1995 the Department of Clinical Pharmacology had 10 beds in its disposal in the Second Clinic of Internal Diseases located in the Central Clinical Hospital of the Silesian Medical Academy. Within several years, this basis increased and from 2005 thanks to Professor's efforts, it acquired the status of Clinic of Internal Diseases and Clinical Pharmacology which has more than 20 beds at present. Under guidance of Prof. Herman, the Chair of Pharmacology belonged to the best units of theory of medicine in the Silesian Medical Academy. In Professor's opinion, the most important achievements of this period of work included the studies on the effect of enkephalins on the immune system (1990), antipsychotic drug-induced changes in neuropeptide Y activity (1995), the effect of antiatherosclerotic drugs on human immune system (1998) and finding new evidences supporting the hypothesis about contribution of inflammatory processes to development of atherosclerotic lesions in humans (2000).

Prof. Zbigniew S. Herman supervised preparation of 33 Doctor's thesis, 13 habilitation dissertations and 5 of his coworkers were granted professor's title.

Prof. Zbigniew S. Herman was the author or co-author of 348 papers in the field of pharmacology and clinical pharmacology, published in renowned scientific journals, cited 1121 times. A majority of them, 283 articles are original papers, of which one was classified by ISI as famous paper. He is the author or co-author of several dozens of chapters in 16 handbooks and textbooks edited by PZWL (Warszawa), for several of which he is one of editors, like for instance: „Pharmacology. Basics in Pharmacotherapy”, „Pharmacotherapy in Surgery, Anesthesiology and Intensive Care”, „Pharmacotherapy of Rheumatic Diseases”, „Pharmacotherapy of Cardiovascular Diseases”. In the last years, he had worked on the next handbook „Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapy for Physicians”, of which four of a total of the planned five volumes have already been published as pocket-books (PZWL Warszawa, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010).

Prof. Zbigniew S. Herman was engaged in endeavors for development of the academy. He fulfilled many functions in the Silesian Medical Academy. He was

a Vice-Dean (1975–1978) and the Dean (1978–1980) of Faculty of Medicine, and in a very difficult period from 1980–1982 he was the Rector of the academy. For almost 20 years, he had actively participated in works of the Senate of the academy, and for 15 years he had been the Chair of the Senate Science Commission, which was the recognition of his authority as a scientist.

Prof. Zbigniew S. Herman not only participated in organization of scientific activities in the academy but also was engaged in works of many scientific institutions and organizations. For many years he had been a member of Council for Science and Higher Education (1982–1985), Committee for Scientific Research (1991–1994), Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (from 1993), Central Commission for Scientific Degrees and Titles (from 1994), Committee for Experimental Therapy of Polish Academy of Sciences (from 1980 he had been its Chair for 10 years), Committee for Physiological Sciences PAS (from 1975), Committee for Ethics in Science at Presidium of PAS (from 1994) and corresponding member of PAS (from 2002). In 2006 he was elected the President of the PAS Branch in Katowice. He was a member of many scientific societies, including Polish Pharmacological Society (Founding Member, President 1986–1989), Polish Society of Clinical Pharmacology (Founding Member), Polish Physiological Society, Polish Biochemical Society, Polish Society of Internists, Polish Society of Anesthesiologists and Intensive Care, and foreign societies: New York Academy of Sciences, European Society of Biochemical Pharmacology, European Society of Neuropharmacology, Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Neuropsychopharmakologie, European College of Neuropsychopharmacology, European Behavioral Pharmacology Society, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Klinische Pharmakologie. He was the Honorary Member of three societies: Polish Pharmacological Society, Polish Society of Anesthesiologists and Intensive Care, and Society of Monitored Therapy. For many years he had been a member of Scientific Board of Institute of Pharmacology PAS in Kraków and Editorial Board of International Journal of Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology, Pharmacological Research and Therapeutics, and Polish Journal of Pharmacology (currently Pharmacological Reports).

He was awarded *Honoris Causa* Doctorate by the Silesian Medical Academy and by the Medical Academy in Lublin. In recognition of his achievements, he

was decorated with the Commander's Cross with Star of *Polonia Restituta* Order, Officer's Cross of *Polonia Restituta* Order, Medal of Commission of National Education, Medal of Polish Medical Society „Gloria Medicinae”.

He was a member of the Polish Association of Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

Prof. Zbigniew S. Herman was a great speaker and lecturer. His always perfectly prepared lectures, delivered from memory, interlaced with anecdotes related to art, were very popular among audience. As an excellent lecturer, he had been frequently invited to participate in congresses and scientific meetings organized not only by pharmacologists but also by medical doctors, internists and anesthesiologists and pharmacists. He delivered lectures also in prestigious university centers in Philadelphia, Atlanta, Milan, Basel, Paris, Erevan, Rochester, New York, Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv.

He was a person of great composure and vivid intelligence. Supreme results which he achieved in science and didactics resulted from his talent as a scientist, enormous diligence and ability to gather people who could get fascinated with scientific research. He was highly respected among his coworkers not only for his wide pharmacological knowledge but also for wise and benevolent advices and wisdom of life, which he readily shared in everyday life. As a boss he was demanding, but he also helped in careers of his disciples, allowed them to develop their own research projects and helped them in their realization. Apart from science, which was his focus till the last days, music and philosophy were his other passions. He could be met very often at concerts in the Silesian Philharmonic, in the Symphonic Music Hall of the Polish Radio in Katowice and at other important musical performances. His erudition in music was commonly known.

At the invitation of the Scientific Committee of the 17th International Congress of Pharmacology (September 16–18, 2010) in Krynica Zdrój, he was preparing the lecture „The evolution of our understanding of antidepressant mechanisms and treatment of major depression”, with which, as he said, he wanted to say good bye to pharmacologists. Sadly, we will not have a privilege to listen to this lecture.

We bid farewell to our Professor who will remain in our thankful memory forever.

Ewa Obuchowicz