

With deepest regret we say farewell
to **Professor MARIA DAŃBSKA**
a long term Editor-in-Chief
of *Folia Neuropathologica*
A person with great personality, modesty and kindness
She will remain in our memory

Editorial Board of Folia Neuropathologica

In memory of Professor Maria Dąmbaska

Jerzy Dymecki



On November 11th, 2005 after a long illness Maria Dąmbaska MD, PhD, an outstanding neuropathologist, an honest, honorable, and people friendly person passed away.

Professor Maria Dąmbaska was born on 4th of December, 1925 in Lvov. She was brought up in a family estate in Rudna Wielka near Rzeszów. She received her secondary-school certificate in conspiracy. She graduated from the Medical Academy in Poznań and on May 24th, 1952 she received her physician's degree. From the very beginning her interests were in psychiatry and internal medicine. After graduation she moved to Gdansk, to her family. She worked in Mental Health and Internal Medicine Clinics. Simultaneously she was employed in the clinic for alcohol prevention in Gdynia. That was the time of the so called "work orders". On several occasions and in order to ensure that her colleagues from Mental Health Counseling were not sent to far away destinations to assume positions under the "work orders" regime, she accompanied me in visiting the Ministry of Health in Warsaw where she fought their case successfully.

Professor Maria Dąmbaska was sent to Dziekanka near Gniezno for the period of 3 years. The unit under her management was well recognized by Professor Anatol Dowżenko who visited it as a consultant. In 1954 she took a 4-month course on Neurology Basics run by assistant – Professor Ewa Osetowska who had earlier returned from her training in the class of Professor Ludo van Bogaert from Bunge. Professor

Osetowska was a great enthusiast of neuropathology which she studied there, and she inspired a group of young neurologists, including Maria Dąmbaska, Henryk Wisniewski, Mirosław Mossakowski, Irmina Zelman, Lech Iwanowski, Tadeusz Majdecki, Halina Kroh and myself to focus on this science.

After completion of the course Maria Dąmbaska took a job in a newly established Laboratory of the Nervous System Histopathology of the Polish Academy of Sciences which was initially a part of the Warsaw Clinic of Neurology of the Medical Academy in Warsaw. The clinic was strongly supported by professor Adam Opalski who made a name for himself in neuropathology by identifying a particular cell type in hepatic encephalopathy. In 1955 and then in 1959 she completed her 1st and 2nd degree of specialization in neurology. In 1955 she received her degree in neuropathology.

In 1955 she joined the Medical Research Centre of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

In 1960 she successfully obtained her doctor's degree with the thesis of "Inflammatory changes in brains after surgery". Ewa Osetowska was her Professor conferring the degree. In 1962 she was sent on a 6-month training in the Belgium Bunge Institute to work with Professor Ludo van Bogaert. That experience determined her further specialization. She was a hard working and very responsible person. She continued her scientific studies in neuropathology with the focus of developmental neuropathology and she became the most outstanding expert on changes

in child's nervous system appreciated both at home and abroad. In 1966 she received her assistant Professor degree as a result of her thesis on "Necroses and inflammations in the brains of fetuses and newborns".

In 1967 she took over the management of Neuropathology Department with Professor Osetowska. The Laboratory of the Developmental Neuropathology was then separated from this department and had been managed by Maria Dąmbska for twenty years.

In 1963 she was one of the founders of the Polish Association of Neuropathologists, as well its journal *Neuropatologia Polska*. Since 1968 she had been a board member of the Polish Association of Neuropathologists working in a number of positions like the Award Committee member and the association chairperson between 1981 and 1987. Simultaneously, since 1980 she had worked as a member of the editorial board of *Neuropatologia Polska* and since 1993 as the Editor-in-Chief of the journal, which started to be published in English and changed its name to *Folia Neuropathologica*. The journal is highly ranked among others in the world. It is included in the so called Philadelphia Listing and has received a marked impact factor. It is indexed in *Medicus/Medline*, *Neurosciences Citations Index*, *Sci Search*, *Research Alert*, *Chemical Abstract*, *Embase/Excerpta Medica*, *Polish Medical Bibliography* and *Index Copernicus*.

In 1990, Professor Dąmbska became a Honorary Member of the Polish Association of Neuropathologists. Since 1982 she had been a member of the International Society of Neuropathology and its vice-president between 1984 and 1988. She was also a member of a number of scientific associations both at home and abroad. Apart from having published articles in Polish and foreign journals (198 publications) she was a mentor to 11 scientists of her own as well other units. She offered her big support in the difficult period of collecting of the material and writing the thesis. She was also a great teacher. She collected plenty of histopathological materials and slides which she then had used during her lectures to medical students in the Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology for 20 years. These presentations were highly recognized by the students. In addition, she wrote a number of sections to handbooks and monographies inclu-

ding the 3 basic neuropathology handbooks. One of her key publications is the "Normal and pathological development of the human brain and spinal cord" which she wrote together with the US Professor Krystyna Wisniewska and which was published by John Libbey in London in 1999.

Apart from her scientific career, Maria Dąmbska devoted a lot of time and attention to her patients. Since 1969 she had been a neurological consultant in the Institute of Oncology at Wawelska Street. Each patient received plenty of her time and attention. For years she was also helping the blind children in Laski. She was visiting them and did the examination as well as regular treatment. She was awarded the "Golden Cross of Merit" in 1978 for her scientific and social contributions.

Professor Maria Dąmbska was frequently invited to trainings in foreign scientific centers, for example, she worked 6 months in the Belgium Institute of Neuropathology with Professor Ludo van Bogaert in 1962, she spent 3 months in the Center of Neonatal Research in Paris and after return she joined the Warsaw Institute of Mother and Child. In 1973 she spent 3 months in the Laboratory of Perinatal Physiology in the NIH Bethesda, USA. She made a number of a few months' visits to the Institute for Basic Research in Developmental Disabilities, State of Island NY in the USA, and her work performed there was published in highly ranked foreign journals.

Professor Dąmbska officially retired on December 31, 1995, however, she did not reduce her activities. She continued work in the Medical Research Centre of the Polish Academy of Sciences as long as she remained in good health. She was the Editor in Chief of *Folia Neuropathologica*. Apart from that she was an active member of the Neurological Sciences Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the chairperson of the Commission of Neuropathology and Neurooncology of that Committee. As before, she organized meetings of that body which included the review of complex histopathological material and active discussions.

Thanks to her warm personality, kindness and willingness to help as well a great sense of responsibility toward her scientific work as well as toward her patients, Professor Maria Dąmbska made a lot of friends.

With deepest regret we pay this final farewell to her, the truly outstanding person.