



### Leonard Falkowski

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the death on 29 August 1993 of Professor Leonard Falkowski, born on 6 November 1933 in Toruń, specialist in marine chemistry and the chemistry of bioactive substances.

Prof. Falkowski graduated from the Department of Chemistry at the Technical University of Gdańsk and was then employed at the Cellulose and Synthetic Fibre Works in Jelenia Góra for 2 years. From 1958 to 1979 he worked at the Departments of Organic Chemistry and of Pharmaceutical Technology and Biochemistry at the Technical University of Gdańsk. There he was involved in the isolation, structural determination, mechanism of action and modification of bioactive compounds, in particular antibiotics. He received his doctorate in 1965.

Among Prof. Falkowski's achievements of that period is a cycle of publications in both Polish and foreign journals which made a significant contribution to our knowledge of the chemistry and biochemistry of polyene macrolides, especially as regards the methods of determining their structures and the synthesis of new derivative groups with improved pharmaceutical properties. His results have taken our knowledge of the mechanism of action of many antimycotic antibiotics a step further, and have been patented in many countries. Prof. Falkowski obtained and characterised new anthracycline derivatives, antibiotics that have become important in the modern treatment of cancers.

By his arrival at the Institute of Oceanology 14 years ago, Prof. Falkowski strengthened its team of marine chemists. Neither the fire that destroyed the chemistry building, nor its subsequent reconstruction, nor the political turmoil in Poland at that time were able to prevent him from setting up an efficient department where, alongside the more traditional disciplines, he developed biochemistry and bioorganic chemistry, fields in which he was a recognised authority. In recognition of his contribution to the development of marine chemistry, he received the title of professor in 1989.

In both his professional and personal contacts, Prof. Falkowski was direct and friendly. Talking to him, one never felt the distance that separates ordinary mortals from great men, and great he most certainly was. Scores of people, those of us who turned to him for comments, advice or assistance, would, I am sure, agree with me on this. Being the cordial person he was, he never refused assistance, even if it meant trouble or inconvenience to himself. In recognition of these qualities, his colleagues elected him to represent them on Polish and international scientific bodies. He was a member of the Praesidium of the Polish Academy of Sciences' Committee on Oceanic Research, and within this, was many times elected Chairman of the Marine Chemistry section. He was also a member of the Polish Chemical Society, the Polish Academy of Sciences' Committee on Trace Analysis of Elementary Organic Substances, and its Subcommittee on Analytical Molecular Spectroscopy. He also represented Poland on the Scientific Committee on Ocean Research and was his country's only representative at the Conference of Baltic Oceanographers. The fact that Prof. Falkowski participated in these committees contributed to their efficacy, and for us, his colleagues, it meant being able to keep up to date with the latest scientific trends.

At home, in the Department of Marine Chemistry and Biochemistry, he was an unending source of ideas and an indefatigable initiator of scientific activities. In their execution he was demanding, but as soon as he realised that the achievements of any one of us had reached a critical mass, he spared no effort to formalise the state of affairs: he supervised several Ph. D. theses. His pupils will follow in his wake, and the influence he had on them will be felt for decades to come.

For his inventions, his scientific and teaching activities, as well as his organisational talents, Prof. Falkowski received many awards, among them the highest honours in the land.

We have lost a beloved and respected master and friend.

We shall remember him well.

*Janusz Pempkowiak*