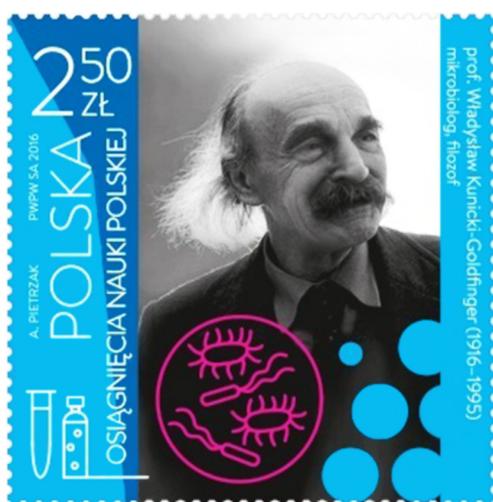


August 14, 2020, marked the 25th anniversary of the death of

**Professor
Władysław J.H. Kunicki-Goldfinger**

microbiologist, geneticist, humanist and social activist, founder of the Department of Microbiology at the Marie Skłodowska-Curie University in Lublin, Department of General Microbiology of the University of Wrocław, Bacterial Genetics Laboratory at the Institute of Immunology and Experimental Therapy at the L. Hirszfeld Polish Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Microbiology at the Faculty of Biology of the University of Warsaw.



This great scientist devoted his professional career to researching various aspects of the lives of the smallest organisms – bacteria, and the results of the research conducted by the Professor and his team have been published in approximately 200 scientific articles in several sub-fields of microbiology, including bacterial genetics, environmental, and veterinary microbiology. The Professor founded the first Polish journal in the field of microbiology – “*Acta Microbiologica Polonica*” (today: “*Polish Journal of Microbiology*”). He was also a long-term editor-in-chief of the journal.

Professor Kunicki-Goldfinger was a teacher and mentor of several generations of Polish microbiologists who took their first steps in the academia by attending his fascinating lectures and reading his excellent “*Life of Bacteria*”, the most popular handbook of general microbiology used in postwar Poland. In addition to research and teaching, the Professor devoted a lot of time to social activism. He took part in the so-called Flying University activities, which later transformed into the Association for Scientific Courses (TKN).

In 1979 TKN created the Academic Aid Fund, directed by Kunicki-Goldfinger. The fund's goal was to help scientists and students who had been victims of

the communist authorities' oppression and give them the opportunity for the continuation of their research or studies. The Professor was also one of the organizers of the Association for the Popularization and Support of Science; he also collaborated with the Workers' Defense Committee. For these activities and his collaboration with the anti-communist underground, he was detained on December 13, 1981, most likely being the only imprisoned active member of the Polish Academy of Sciences. In the later period of his life, he was also a member of the Lech Wałęsa's Civic Committee, and in 1989 he took part in the Round Table discussions in the working group for science and education.

The Professor's interests went beyond microbiology. He was a naturalist scientist and a humanist. He spent the last years of his life on issues related to the philosophy of science. In the 1970s, he created a seminar series in Evolutionary and Theoretical Biology. He was also a member of the Philosophy of Science Section of the Polish Philosophical Association and the Committee for Evolutionary and Theoretical Biology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. His best-known books include *Heritage and the Future: Considerations of Molecular Biology, Evolution and the Human, Looking for Possibilities* and his last book, *From Nowhere to Nowhere*. In these books, the author wrote about complicated concepts in a reader-friendly way.

However, the Professor's most lasting legacy is not his books and publications but the academic units he created in three Polish cities. All of these units are still developing dynamically, which would make the Professor proud.

We, his oldest students, those who are professionally active and those who have retired, still remember our teacher and mentor – a role model for practicing good science and a role model for leading a dignified life. We are also doing our best to ensure that this outstanding figure remains familiar to many students who are currently passing through the Institute of Microbiology's halls, which Kunicki-Goldfinger founded.