

## In commemoration of Professor Miron Gaj



On July 5, 2015 Professor Miron Gaj, Honorary Editor of *Optica Applicata*, passed away at the age of 88 years. Wrocław scientific community gave last honors to Professor by attending his funeral ceremony at the Osobowice Cemetery on July 7, 2015. We lost an outstanding scientist, a co-founder of Polish school of optics, whose professional career was closely connected with Wrocław University of Technology (former Wrocław Polytechnics). Professor Miron Gaj was also an outstanding organizer and animator of academic life. Two of his initiatives should be mentioned in this context. The first one is a scientific journal *Optica Applicata*, which he co-founded in 1971. Professor Miron Gaj was its first Editor-in-Chief and, after his retirement, an Honorary Editor. *Optica Applicata* is one of a few scientific journals issued by Wrocław University of Technology indexed in the Master Journal List. The second visionary idea of Professor was a cycle of Polish-Czech-Slovak optical conferences, started in 1973 and lasting until now. The jubilee twentieth conference will be held in Slovakia in 2016.

Professor Miron Gaj was born on August 22, 1927 in Koronowo, Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodeship. He started his higher education at Gliwice Polytechnics in 1947. A year later he moved to Wrocław where he continued his studies in physics at the Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry of Wrocław University and Polytechnics. In 1952 he got his master's degree in philosophy, in the field of physics. He began to work in 1951 at the Department of Experimental Physics of Wrocław University and Polytechnics, already before he completed his studies. He was first an assistant in the Geometrical Optics Group lead by prof. Roman Ingarden. In 1954 he joined the Department of Physics of Wrocław Polytechnics, which was founded two years earlier. He defended his doctoral thesis in optics in 1959 at the Mechanical Faculty of Wrocław Polytechnics, with prof. Roman Ingarden as a promoter. It is worth pointing out that it was the first PhD title obtained by a scientist from the Department of Physics of Wrocław Polytechnics. Professor Miron Gaj got his habilitation degree in physical sciences in 1963 at the Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry of Wrocław University. In 1971 he became a university professor and then in 1980 a full professor. At the beginning of the sixties, he took part in a six-month academic training in prof. Harold Hopkins group in England. In 1980–1983 he was a Dean of the Faculty of Fundamental Problems of Technology at Wrocław University of Technology. He published 69 journal papers and 3 monographies. He was a promoter of 11 PhD dissertations. Two students of Professor Miron Gaj obtained habilitation degrees in optics and one – a title of professor.

In 1968–1976 Professor Miron Gaj was the head of the Department of Optical Imaging. He was an authority in the field of optical systems design. As far as this difficult art is concerned, he came

a long way from a slide rule to advanced computer simulations. When it was technically feasible, he became an enthusiast of using computers in optical systems design and a co-author (in collaboration with ELWRO) of the first computer programs used in this field in Poland. A great achievement of Professor Miron Gaj consisted in gathering together, in the Department he headed, a group of young enthusiasts of numerical simulations, who realized many unique practical designs under his supervision. One of the most important achievements of Professor Miron Gaj group was designing microscope objectives manufactured in the seventies in Polish Optical Plant (PZO) in Warsaw.

Professor Miron Gaj was also an eminent lecturer, the author of 4 students textbooks, distinguished teacher of many generations of students and PhD students in optics. He was a member of the Optical Society of America, the Optics Section of Polish Academy of Sciences Committee, Polish Physical Society (a vice-chairman of Wrocław Division in 1966–1968 and a chairman in 1968–1970). Professor Miron Gaj was awarded the Knight Cross of the Polish Revival, the Golden Badge of Wrocław University of Technology, the Medal of the 30th Anniversary of Wrocław University of Technology, and the Medal of Merit of the Palacký University of Olomouc, Czech Republic.

Upon the decease of Professor Miron Gaj we have lost a co-founder and great friend of *Optica Applicata*, its first Editor-in-Chief, outstanding referee and author. His activity contributed to increasing the position of our journal in the international optical community. We will remember him also as a modest, good and warm-hearted man.

Wacław Urbańczyk  
Editor-in-Chief