

## *Prof. Dr Jerzy Radecki – a personal tribute*

On January 22, 2021, Jerzy Radecki passed away. He had become an emeritus Professor recently (2019) and it is very unfortunate that he was not able to enjoy for a longer time, together with his wife Hanna, his well-deserved retirement. I was asked to write a personal tribute which I consider to be an honour.

I first became acquainted with Jerzy Radecki at the beginning of my independent career some time around early 1997. I had asked Prof. Marek Pietraszkiewicz to bring me into contact with a possible postdoctoral collaborator and he gave me Jerzy's email. It very soon became apparent that Jerzy was a lot more senior than the future collaborator that I had in mind, but we started corresponding and it became clear that there would be some possible basis for a collaboration. At that time there was a Polish-Flemish grant scheme. To prepare for this I decided, since the deadline was near, to travel immediately to Olsztyn to jointly start preparing a proposal. Probably the self-invited visit of this crazy unknown person from Belgium greatly alarmed Jerzy and his wife Hanna, but nevertheless they were waiting for me with a cardboard sign carrying my name in the station of Olsztyn on a spring day in 1997. Somewhat later we were informed that the grant application was indeed successful and this was the start of a long collaboration and friendship. At the beginning of the collaboration Jerzy and Hanna were still at the University of Olsztyn. Frankly speaking the research facilities there were not the best at that time, but I was greatly impressed with the passion and enthusiasm they had for research and for scientific discussions, that could be going on until the late hours. The passion for research also included the establishment of the journal "Polish Journal of Environmental Studies" thirty years ago, which carries on successfully until this day, and I hope will be continued. We also discovered from the beginning of our interaction a common taste for jazz and blues music, and for a good glass of beer to go with it. Since then there have been many trips of people from my group to Olsztyn, and in the case of Jerzy and Hanna to Leuven, or we met abroad on international conferences. A visit to jazz and blues café "De Blauwe Kater- The Blue Cat" was obligatory during any visit to Leuven.

Early on in our collaboration, Jerzy and Hanna both moved to the Academy of Sciences in Olsztyn, which was an important step because they got much better conditions there and this led to many successful projects for their Biosensor group, including major European projects and large infrastructure grants. One of the things organized in the framework of these projects were the summer schools in Łansk, where we enjoyed excellent hospitality, every time for two weeks in the middle of September. During these unforgettable summer schools we were able to listen to the talks of top scientists in a marvelous environment, near to a lake secluded in the middle of the woods. After the end of the European project we actually decided to carry on this tradition with regular visits to Łansk, but then on a smaller scale under the form of joint Polish-Flemish group meetings, and we also went there a final time to celebrate Jerzy and Hanna's retirement in the fall of 2019. I also have very fond memories of our joint 10 day bird watching holiday to Costa Rica in early 2018, where we almost succeeded not to talk (too much) about science. It can be stated that almost 25 years of collaboration have resulted in a large number of joint publications, and we can look back satisfied with the significant work done, but such lists of accomplishments can be read elsewhere.

I consider myself very lucky to have met and worked with Prof. Dr Jerzy Radecki, my life would not have been the same without him. My heartfelt wishes go out to the ones left behind too early, his wife Hanna and daughter Dorothy.

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