



Prof. dr hab. n. med. Ariadna Gierek-Łapińska

1938–2020

A life devoted to ophthalmology

On December 26th, 2020 in Katowice passed away Prof. Ariadna Gierek-Łapińska, MD, PhD, one of the most outstanding personalities of the Polish ophthalmology. Professor Gierek-Łapińska was born on May 1st, 1938 in Vilnius. In years 1956–1963 studied at the Faculty of Medicine of the Silesian Medical University in Katowice and obtained a MD degree. After completing the postgradual internship, she was employed at the Ophthalmology Department of GZOZ Mining Hospital in Bytom, where she worked in the years 1965–1966. In 1965, she defended her PhD dissertation entitled *Effect of acridine orange on the multiplication of the attenuated polimyelitis virus in HeLa cells* written under the guidance of Prof. Jerzy Szaflarski, MD, PhD. In 1966, she started working as an assistant at the Chair and Clinic of Ophthalmology at the Silesian Medical University in Katowice, where she worked until 2008, until retirement time.

She obtained the first degree of specialization in the field of ophthalmology in 1967, and the second in 1969. In 1973 as a result of a colloquium and the habilitation dissertation entitled *The study of certain hormones in women patients with simple glaucoma during the menopause* she obtained the title of associate professor. In 1977, Gierek-Łapińska received the title of professor, and in 1987, the title of full professor.

In the years 1969–1974 she was the Head of the Ophthalmology Clinic of the Institute of Diseases of the Nervous System and Sense Organs of the Silesian Medical Academy, and in the years 1977–2008 the head of the Department and Clinic of Ophthalmology at the Medical University of Silesia. In 1988–2008, she was the director of Independent Public Clinical Hospital No. 5 of the Medical University of Silesia in Katowice.

Professor Gierek-Łapińska was the author of 315 scientific papers published in scientific journals in Poland and abroad, a co-author of eight books and the author of three patents. She also performed the duties of a provincial specialist in the field of ophthalmology for the Opolskie, Częstochowa and Śląskie provinces. She was a supervisor of over 50 doctorates and a tutor of seven habilitation theses. Professor Gierek-Łapińska was the first in Poland to introduce microsurgical techniques to ophthalmic procedures and

to start implanting intraocular lenses and initiated refractive laser surgery for correction of refractive errors.

We said goodbye to one of the most outstanding figures in the history of polish ophthalmology, known not only in Poland, but also around the world. Her scientific and organizational activity as a promoter of ophthalmology in society will forever be remembered not only by polish ophthalmologists, but also by polish society. Despite many duties, she was a doctor who found time to talk to the patients and took care of their problems, which was emphasized by so many patients with whom I could talk personally. She was also a woman of outstanding individuality and a very strong personality. These character features were the cause that during its 43-year activity she changed the face of polish ophthalmology, being the leader of many innovations in the field of eye diseases treatment in our country. It is also her merit to create a world-class ophthalmic center in Katowice, equipped with equipment that does not differ from the equipment in the best clinics in the world. Like many other outstanding personalities she also paid a personal price for her achievements.

Professor's family was also related to medicine. Tatiana's sister Gierek was a professor of otolaryngology, and daughter Stanisława is a professor of ophthalmology.



Professor Ariadna Gierek-Łapińska will remain forever in the memory of polish ophthalmologists and patients treated by her as an outstanding doctor, scientist and organizer.

Funeral of Prof. Ariadna Gierek-Łapińska took place on December 31st, 2020, in the Orthodox Church of Saints Wiera, Nadzieja, Luba and their mother Sophia in Sosnowiec.

*Professor Gierek-Łapińska, rest in peace
We join with her family in the pain of Her loss*

Editor-in-Chief

Prof. Marek Prost, MD, PhD

Photographs provided courtesy of prof. Stanisława Gierek-Ciaciury.