

*Wojciech Zieliński\**

## MEMORIES OF PROFESSOR RYSZARD ZIELIŃSKI

Ryszard Zieliński was born on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1932 in Warsaw, where he lived until the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944. When the Uprising was suppressed he stayed at the migration camp in Pruszkow, near Warsaw. After his



Professor Ryszard Zieliński

mother's death he lived in nearby Piastow. In 1950 he started his studies in the Central School of Planning and Statistics (CSP&S) and three years later he completed the first degree of his studies in statistical quality control. In 1955 he graduated from CSP&S with the master's thesis "Power of the control chart of individual values" („Moc karty kontrolnej indywidualnych wartości”), which was written under the supervision of his tutor Professor Wiesław Sadowski. After studies he started his professional career in the Róża Luksemburg Electric Lamps Manufacturing Plant, where he first took the position of an engineer in technical control unit and later became a quality control specialist. He kept developing his scientific research, which, after completing his doctoral thesis in 1961, earned him the PhD degree in CSP&S. The doctoral thesis was also written under the supervision of Professor Wiesław Sadowski. In the meantime he started postgraduate studies at the Department of Mathematics and Physics of the University of Warsaw. He graduated in 1963 with a MSc degree in mathematics.

On June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1959 he submitted his request to leave the Róża Luksemburg Plant and on the following day he took a job in the Mathematical Machines Experimental Manufacturing Plant, where he worked until October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1963. Since November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1963 he worked in the Military Aviation Technical Institute. Holding his positions in the Mathematical Machines Experimental Manufacturing Plant and the Aviation Military Technical Institute, he was simultaneously

---

\* Full Professor, Department of Econometrics and Statistics, Warsaw University of Life Sciences.

working for the Institute of Mathematics of the Polish Academy of Sciences, first half-time and since October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1965 – full-time. He maintained his close ties with the Institute till the end of his life.

In 1976 he received habilitation qualifications in mathematics and in 1988 the title of professor of mathematics. In 1997 Ryszard Zieliński was promoted to the position of the professor in the Institute of Mathematics of the Polish Academy of Sciences. His research concentrated on statistics, in particular on the following areas: Monte Carlo methods, random numbers generators, stochastic approximation, robustness, nonparametric estimation of quantiles and applications of statistics.

The collection of scientific works written by Ryszard Zieliński includes almost 150 positions. Among them there are original works, application works, books, translations and others. His first published work dates back to 1956 and the last one was issued in 2012. The list of his publications can be found on his original website (special tab on [wojtek.zielinski.statystyka.info](http://wojtek.zielinski.statystyka.info)).

The research done by Ryszard Zieliński was motivated by his curiosity and inquiring mind. His attitude to work can be perfectly characterized by the opinion he received leaving the Róża Luksemburg Plant in 1959: "... was a very accurate, conscientious and disciplined man with great creativeness and organizational instinct".

Apart from conducting scientific research, Ryszard Zieliński was working with students and young researchers. He supervised dissertations of fourteen PhD students, among whom eleven were from Poland and three from abroad.

Ryszard Zieliński was one of the initiators of the Conference of Mathematics in Applications and the Conference "Mathematical Statistics" (known as "Wisła" among statisticians). For many years he was very active working in the programme and organizational committees of these conferences, having a strong impact on their forms. He also initiated the Commission of Mathematical Statistics of the Committee of Mathematics. For several terms he held the position of its chairman. He was a member of editorial boards of many scientific journals, i.e. Applied Mathematics (Matematyka Stosowana), *Applicationes Mathematicae*, *Statistics*.

Educational work was an indispensable part of Ryszard Zieliński's activities. Since the sixties of the XX century he was a tutor on courses in application of mathematics, held by the Institute of Mathematics of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He also worked as a lecturer in the University of Warsaw, Technical University of Warsaw or in the School of Science. He had the opinion of a very good teacher, perfectly prepared to run the courses. His lectures were neatly organized in a logical, coherent way. Basing on the lectures in mathematical statistics he ran at the University of Warsaw, he wrote a book "Seven introductory lectures to mathematical statistics", PWN, 1990, which is

commonly recognized as one of top, although not easy, textbooks in mathematical statistics. In his late years he ran courses in the Center for Advanced Studies of the Technical University of Warsaw.

In the seventies of the XX century, he took part in work on introducing the probability calculus to the curriculum of secondary education. One of the effects of this work was the book “Probability calculus and elements of mathematical statistics” (“Rachunek prawdopodobieństwa z elementami statystyki matematycznej”, PZWS, 1973) which was very popular and had three editions. The book extended the standard course in probability and was addressed to students who attended extra classes. It also promoted mathematical statistics. The series of his works published by Delta Publisher in years 1975–1978 was another example of his activities in the field of education.

Ryszard Zieliński’s wide-ranging interests reached far beyond statistics. He was interested in film, theatre, music. His private collection of books included several hundreds of volumes of poetry, documents, historical books, science-fiction and many others. The vast part of his collection comprised albums dedicated to painting, sculpture and architecture, both Polish and foreign, as well as books, whose topics were linked to Warsaw. He watched many films and frequently attended theatre performances and concerts. He used to talk passionately about each book he read, film, or play he watched and concert he attended, even many years after. He was a man very curious about the world, an eager traveller over Poland and all over the world. He was passionate about trekking and biking so he travelled across Poland on foot or by bike. He possessed an impressive collection of maps and tourist guides, which he used extensively. He travelled to many countries, linking his professional duties with great interest in the world. Having experienced numerous journeys, he would talk about them in a very interesting way, covering details of the places he visited.

Ryszard Zieliński was married once, had one son, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He passed away on April 30th, 2012.

