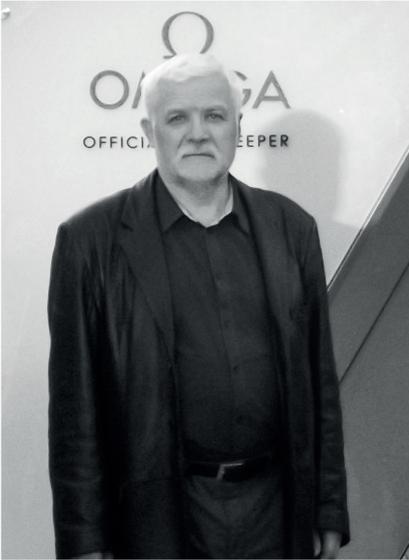


In Memoriam



**PROFESSOR MARIAN GIERULA
(1955 – 2020)**

Professor Marian Gierula was born in Bielsko Biala. He graduated from the Technical and Mechanical Secondary School in Bielsko Biala. From 1975 to 1979, he studied political science with a major in journalism at the Faculty of Social Sciences, the University of Silesia in Katowice. As a student, he became involved in media research. In the third year of his studies, he undertook a comprehensive media analysis of the local weekly “Kronika Bielska” between 1956 and 1976. This research paved the way for him

to take-up the position of assistant researcher in the Department of Journalism at the University of Silesia and further scientific development. Media and periodic communication became the subject of his professional work and life passion.

On 1 February 1980, he started working at the Department of Journalism at the University of Silesia, where he went through further career positions. He led the Department of Journalism from 2003 until the establishment of the Institute of Journalism and Media Communication. The birth of this Institute took place, among others, thanks to his many years of effort.

He obtained his doctoral degree in February 1988 at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Silesia. His dissertation covered the issue of local weeklies. On 22 June 2001, at the Faculty of Philology and Journalism of the Rostov State University in Rostov-on-Don in Russia, he defended his habilitation thesis based on a book written in Russian, and entitled “Polish local press 1989–2000: Typology and social functioning”.

In the academic world, Professor Marian Gierula was recognized by such qualities as openness, honesty, diligence, and enthusiasm. These features allowed him to mobilize his colleagues and students for creative scientific work. His diligence and professionalism aroused recognition in the scientific community in Poland and abroad.

Dozens of his scientific publications in Polish and Russian resulted from his empirical inquiries concerning local and regional media, as well as media

in Russia and post-Soviet countries. Such a legacy has enriched media knowledge by initial results and has permanently entered the achievements of communication and media studies.

The distinguishing features of the professional life of Marian Gierula, who has always been associated with media studies, are the extent and depth of his analyses. Media studies require a combination of both these skills within the approached research paradigm. This paradigm in scientific work for him and for the Katowice Media School, of which he was the co-creator – came to ‘time and space.’

As a leader of the Media School, he was known for inspiring and stimulating the growth of his younger colleagues. Like no other, he was able to enjoy the successes of his colleagues and pupils. Ultimately, he was a real mentor, but also a good human, an empathetic and kind person, sensitive to the needs and problems of others.

Marian Gierula’s energy was not enough for academic research. For many years he worked as an expert collaborating with the press, radio, and television editors in Silesia. He shared his in-depth knowledge of local and regional communication with state and local authorities as well as the media business. Like Irena Tetelowska or James D. Halloran (former chairman of IAMCR), he was convinced of the usefulness of research on journalism and media communication. His experience in dealing with the non-academic world confirmed that media experts could provide socially essential and useful knowledge to practitioners, i.e., editorial staff, journalists, publishers, politicians.

The world communities of media and research community have lost a reliable scholar.

Marek Jachimowski & Damian Guzek

UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA, KATOWICE, POLAND

Photo by Patrycja Szostok-Nowacka

“[...] Marian Gierula’s activity is a clear example of commitment to the idea of a European scholar who is a member of an informal ‘republic of scholarship’ and to strengthening transborder exchange of contemporary knowledge [...]”

Aleksander Koroczanski

BELGORD STATE UNIVERSITY, RUSSIA

“[...] I think that it was his unique feature: He was able to attract people and incorporate them into his inner-circle. We thought we still had a lot of time and that it was just the beginning of our long-term friendship. We thought that we had time for projects, cooperation, visits... We say that some people have a light-weight hand: they are able to finish everything what they start [...]”

Marina Bierieznaja

SAINT PETERSBURG UNIVERSITY, RUSSIA

“[...] Meticulousness and accuracy – none of these features reflects him completely. I mean that in his work, he did not miss any details and he accepted all the duties. [...]”

Sergiej Korkonosenko

SAINT PETERSBURG UNIVERSITY, RUSSIA

“[...] Marian always gave important conceptual lectures that inspired debates not only during the conference sessions but also long after those sessions. His ability to integrate the audience was noted during his first presentation [...]”

Aleksander Ostaszewskij

UNIVERSITY IN KRASNODAR



**PROFESSOR MICHAŁ GAJLEWICZ
(1946–2020)**

I met Michał a long time ago when we, as freshmen, were listening to prof. Adam Podgórecki, our then Dean, who was trying to explain to us what the university community was about. He said: “There, if nowhere else, at our Faculty (Sociology Section at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Warsaw), it is the strength of arguments that prevails, not the argument of strength.” Let me revive the memories of us entering the University of Warsaw after the authorities had dispersed the Club of Contradiction Seekers (Klubu

Poszukiwaczy Sprzeczności), of which I was a member, and a moment before the Secret Service Officers had entered the apartment of Stanisław Gomułka to arrest some people who were working on the famous letter to the communist party members. Among those arrested were my scoutmaster Jacek Kuroń, Karol Modzelewski and Bolesław Tejkowski. The name of the latter, who was a sociologist was to be connected with Michał.

At that time, Michał seemed to me to be very mature, incredibly well-organized and systematic. Later on, I discovered how talented he was in languages. He already spoke Russian very well at that time, and he learned German fast. Very soon he began to read books in Russian and German, which we borrowed from the Central Military Library and the library of the Higher School of Social Sciences. There were either books by well-known American sociologists brought to Poland, or abstracts of their work in Polish or Russian.

In 1969, Michał defended his MA thesis entitled “Effectiveness of propaganda” with the already mentioned prof. Adam Podgórecki and started, like all of us, to look for a job. He found it with the Survey and Research Bureau of the Polish food distributor *Spółem*, into which he also briefly drew me.

Shortly afterwards, while already working, he experienced, like a few of us, an episode of being involved with Bolesław Tejkowski. Engineer and sociologist and politician, Tejkowski in the early 1970s developed the Lechicki Circle of World-Worshippers of the pagan god Światowid with the aim of reaching out to pre-Christian cultural traditions.

Michał’s doctorate thesis, supervised by Professor Józef Kądzieski, was prepared and ultimately defended in 1978. It concerned empirical research on the media undertaken in the Soviet Union.

I know that scholarly work, first at the Institute of Journalism of the University of Warsaw, and later at the Social Academy of Sciences, brought Michał a lot of satisfaction. Definitely, more than the bureaucratic work as Director of the Institute of Journalism of the University of Warsaw. Yet, his most satisfactory occupation was the research work.

After all, it was Michał who introduced to Polish scientific literature the concept of „new media”. Karol Jakubowicz wrote about it in *The New Ecology of Media*: „In the 1980s [the new media, SJ] became subject to numerous analyses. Some tried to review all the new techniques (...) others focused on individual new media (...) or tried to understand the consequences of this process of change. In Poland, such a role was played, among others, in the series of articles by Michał Gajlewicz” (pp. 60–61). I would like to add that apart from the research articles, Michał popularized the notion of new media, and the phenomenon itself was analyzed reliably in his habilitation thesis „Persuasive techniques in the era of new media” printed – ironically – by the printing studio of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party. Written in 1988, it was the fruit of not only an F. Ebert Foundation scholarship, granted to Michał in 1982, which enabled him to study in Germany, but also his lively contacts with former scholarship holders, his studies of West German, British and American journals and his correspondence with prof. Peter Bruck and prof. George Gerbner.

He never ceased to be an active academic teacher and scientist. Despite his condition growing worse, he never lost his sense of humor, sticking to his situational joke, and telling anecdotes.

There are fewer and fewer people amongst us like Michał Gajlewicz.

Stanisław Jędrzejewski

KOZMIŃSKI UNIVERSITY, WARSAW, POLAND



**PROFESSOR ZBIGNIEW ONISZCZYK
(1955–2020)**

Professor Zbigniew Oniszczyk studied political science at the University of Silesia in Katowice. He obtained his master's degree in 1980. He joined the Department of Journalism at the Institute of Political Sciences at the University of Silesia in 1981, and in 1988 he defended his doctoral dissertation. From the very beginning, he was interested in foreign media systems. Thanks to his excellent command of the German language, in the 1990s he started researching the changes in the Austrian and German media. His

research interests focused on media systems and media policy, as well as the relationship between the media and politics. He was a scholarship holder of the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Institute of Journalism at the University of Salzburg. He was awarded the habilitation degree on April 29, 2003. His habilitation thesis concerned the post-war media policy of the federal government in Germany (*Kształtowanie się polityki medialnej (Medienpolitik) rządu RFN w latach 1949–1989*). From 2004 he belonged to the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Publizistik und Kommunikationswissenschaft. From 2008, he was a member of the editorial board of the *Central European Journal of Communication*. He was also one of the founders of the Polish Communication Association (PTKS). First, he was the treasurer of PTKS, and in 2013 he became its vice president. In 2019, he received the honorary membership of PTKS. He was also a member of the KRRiT competition jury of the Dr. Paweł Stępka Award (2017–2018). He also chaired the DOCTORATE contest from 2008 to 2019. In 2012, he also became the vice-president of the Katowice branch of the Polish Political Science Association. Since 2012 he was a member of the International Project CultMedia (International Network on Cultural Diversity and New Media), launched in 2002. He was awarded three times by the Rector of the University of Silesia in Katowice for his scientific work (2004, 2007, 2017).

As a researcher, he focused primarily on the theoretical aspects of the functioning of media systems. He was one of the first Polish media experts to consider the mediatization of the public sphere, especially politics. Thanks to his cooperation with German university centers his publications were often of a comparative nature. In 2014, he became the head of the Department of International Communication and Media Systems at the Institute of Political Science and

Journalism at the University of Silesia in Katowice. He initiated a Silesian accent in European research on the connections between media and politics. Professor Oniszczyk's last great research project was a grant under the OPUS 10 competition, financed by the National Science Center. In 2016–2020, he led a team that analyzed the relations between media and political elites in Poland. The background of the research was the German experience, which had previously been the subject of Professor Oniszczyk's interest. The project was finalized just before the Professor's death. At the beginning of 2020, during his illness, a book was published entitled *The Elites of the Media versus the Elites of Politics in Poland*, collecting the results of the team's research: a content analysis of the Polish opinion press, in-depth interviews with politicians and journalists, and surveys among representatives of both environments. The community of media researchers will surely remember him as a committed scientist, an outstanding expert in German media, an excellent theorist who can transfer interesting trends in world science to Poland. His publications had a huge impact on the new generation of media researchers in Poland, indicating the most important directions in world research.

Professor Zbigniew Oniszczyk was a man with an extraordinary sense of humor, open and ready for discussion. He could listen and at the same time attracted attention with his knowledge and scientific passion. We lost not only a great scientist, but also a friendly, open-minded and energetic colleague and friend.

Marek Jachimowski, Mariusz Kolczyński & Dagmara Głuszek-Szafraniec

UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA, KATOWICE, POLAND



PROFESSOR PIOTR FRANCUZ (1960–2020)

Piotr Francuz was, we believe, the most original and pioneering cognitive psychologist of his time in Poland. Born in Bielsko-Biała, Piotr studied and spent his entire academic career at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL). He earned his Master's Degree in 1984 and Ph.D. in 1990. He was appointed Head of the Department of Experimental Psychology in 2004 and rose to full professor in 2015. In 2012–2019 he served as Director of the Institute of Psychology at KUL. Piotr was the author and co-author of more than 20 academic books and more than 100 peer-reviewed

scientific articles, many of which have been published in important journals affiliated with the Journal Citation Reports. His research was funded by the National Science Centre, the National Centre for Research and Development and other renowned institutions. Piotr received many of the top honors in the field of psychology in Poland, including the Władysław Witwicki Award from the Humanities and Social Sciences Division of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Teofrast Award for the best book on psychology from *Charaktery*, a Polish popular science magazine, and the Lecturer of the Year Award from the Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland. He was also awarded high state distinctions by the President of the Republic of Poland, including the Commander's Cross of the Polonia Restituta Order in 2008 and the Gold Medal for Long Service in 2019. Piotr had also been involved in building a broader scientific community, bringing together scholars from various disciplines. He was one of the founders of the Polish Communication Association and its vice president from 2007 to 2010. He was also honoured with the Copernicus Prize from the Polish Neuropsychological Society for achievements in developing neuroscience in Poland.

Piotr had broad research interests, but was mainly focused on visual perception and imagery, media processing and experimental aesthetics. His doctoral dissertation concerned the role of the attributes of objects in categorization. Later on he became interested in the studies on communication and media, especially with regard to the processes of understanding the television news programmes. Piotr had established an innovative research methodology in this area which brought to fruition his habilitation thesis in 2003. It also gained him the position of an expert in media research and resulted in scientific cooperation with the Polish Television. As his interest in the studies on media

processing continued to grow, Piotr has also looked for new methods to study and measure these processes. In 2008, his bold vision and strong organizational skills enabled him to launch Perception & Cognition Lab at KUL, a cutting-edge psychophysiological laboratory, fully-equipped with high-definition audiovisual systems, eye-tracking devices and electrophysiological technology, one of the first laboratories of this kind in Poland. Most importantly, however, Piotr was able to attract and retain young and skilled students and Ph.D. candidates and to build and manage a successful research team. Today, Perception & Cognition Lab is a home to a group of scientists who were all privileged to work with Piotr and to call him a colleague and a friend.

Another unique quality of Piotr was his ability to ask fundamental questions about the nature of reality and the mechanisms of the mind. In his research on imagery and perception, he was most interested in the basic physiological and neural mechanisms leading to the creation of mental images. On the other hand, Piotr was concerned with understanding the mind not as a passive recipient of the world, but rather as its active creator. He saw the interconnections between different fields of science, which was reflected in his monograph *Imagia*, the crowning achievement of his inquiries into the fields of both visual media and perception and imagery. Piotr strived to build a neurocognitive theory of images, which he considered the foundation of communication in the contemporary world. Recently, he has also been working on a research project on experimental aesthetics. He intended to focus on the creation of an aesthetic experience in the recipient of the classical branches of visual art, such as painting. Unfortunately, he did not manage to complete this work. He was also planning to pursue further scientific projects and publications. Piotr was tireless in asking research questions and always approached them with the same passion he had in life, regardless of whether it was a private or a professional matter. At the same time, despite all his achievements and honors, he remained a straightforward person, always available to his colleagues and students, eager to talk and showing genuine interest in the lives of others. Piotr saw the value in sharing knowledge and enjoyed the success of others both in the scientific and personal fields. He still had a lot to offer to the world and other people. He will be greatly missed.

Paweł Stróżak & Emilia Zabielska-Mendyk

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