



*Prof. Wiktor Oktaba*  
1920–2009



## **In memory of Wiktor Oktaba (1920–2009)**

Just 7 months before his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on September 6, 2009, Professor Wiktor Oktaba passed away. It is an immense loss to the Department of Applied Mathematics and Computer Science of the University of Life Sciences in Lublin. Professor Oktaba formed the department in 1952 and headed it for 38 years until his retirement in 1990. Even after his retirement he remained a part of our department.

Professor Oktaba was fascinated with mathematics, mathematical statistics and biometry. He devoted his life to research, teaching and scientific collaboration for over 50 years. He promoted 37 masters of science and 17 Phds. He was extremely hard working and this passion motivated and enriched his life with happiness. Professor Oktaba was an enthusiastic person with wide-ranging interests. Apart from his scientific work he wrote memoirs (during retirement), and led an active life, enjoying sports, especially tennis. He was also fascinated with classical music, theatre, films and books. We know that nowadays such professors are very hard to come by, so we are very grateful to have had the opportunity to work with him for so many years.

Professor Wiktor Oktaba was born in Kiev on April 16, 1920. In 1925 his parents settled in Legionowo near Warsaw. In 1938 he graduated from the Leopold Lis-Kula Gymnasium and embarked on his higher education in mathematics at the University of Warsaw. There he had the opportunity to listen to very famous mathematicians such as: Wacław Sierpiński, Karol Borsuk, Kazimierz Kuratowski, Edward Marczewski and others. Unfortunately,

his education was interrupted by the Second World War. He spent the early months of the war in Warsaw and later moved to Kazmierz Dolny.

In 1944 he resumed his study in mathematics at the newly founded University of Marie Curie-Skłodowska (UMCS) in Lublin. In 1947 he received his Master of Science degree in mathematics. In 1957 was awarded his Phd in mathematics at UMCS and in 1966 achieved the title of professor. He was a fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation at Iowa State University in the 1959/1960 academic year. There he was acquainted and collaborated with distinguished and world-renowned statisticians such as O. Kempthorn, B. V. Shah, T. A. Bancroft, G. Zyskind, J. N. K. Rao and D. Hartley.

The scientific career of Professor Wiktor Oktaba commenced when as a 2<sup>nd</sup> year student he was given an assistant position in the Department of Mathematics at UMCS, and lasted throughout his life. His scientific contribution spanned the areas of experimental design, statistics and probability. He was interested in estimation and testing hypotheses for univariate and multivariate Gauss-Markoff models with missing observations, as well as regression, variance components estimation and planning experiments. He published approximately 220 original papers, 13 books and 8 dictionaries of statistical terms.

Professor Wiktor Oktaba was a member of many scientific societies including: The International Biometric Society, The International Statistical Institute, The American Institute in the Division of Administrative Research, The Institute of Mathematical Statistics, The Polish Mathematical Society, The Polish Biometric Society. He fulfilled many diverse functions in these societies and his scientific and organizational achievement were recognized and awarded by 56 medals and awards.

Professor Wiktor Oktaba had an enormous impact on the development of biometry in Poland. He co-founded the Polish Biometric Society in 1959, and served as President of the Scientific Council from 1976 until his death. In 1970 he initiated the annual Colloquium Biometricum conferences, which are now international and last to the present day. He also initiated annual proceedings, and served as the Editor-in-Chief of the official periodical of the Polish Biometric Society, Colloquium Biometricum, which has been published since 1970.

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Professor Wiktor Oktaba passed away on Sunday, September 6 2009, the very day the 39<sup>th</sup> International Biometrical Colloquium was commencing. This conference was organized by our department and held for the first time in Kazimierz Dolny, the Professor's favorite town. His funeral ceremony was held in Kazimierz Dolny on September 9 on the last day of the conference. All friends, colleagues and students which attended the conference had an opportunity to pay their last respects and thank him for the life he devoted to mathematics, statistics and biometry.

He was laid to rest beside Janeczka, his beloved wife of over 60 years.

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