On 24 May 2002 we were bereaved of Professor Stanisław Misztal, Head of the Department of Medicinal Chemistry and a member of the Scientific Council at the Institute of Pharmacology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków, ex-Deputy Director for General Affairs of the Institute, the only member of the Institute’s staff who had been working therein since the very beginning.

We bade sad farewell to an eminent scientist, a highly praised expert in medicinal chemistry, a teacher and tutor of many young specialists in this field, an excellent organizer of scientific activities, a very modest and hard-working person who had developed an exceptional passion for his scientific work, but at the same was deeply devoted to his research group and the Institute. We said farewell to a soldier of underground Poland who, as a teenager, risked his life fighting against the invader during the 2nd World War.

Born on 23 August 1927, Professor Stanisław Misztal graduated from the Faculty of Mathematics and Chemistry of the Jagiellonian University, having received an M.Sc. degree in chemistry in 1952. Being still a student, he took up a job at the Department of Pharmacology of the Medical Academy in Kraków; in 1954 he became an assistant to Professor Janusz Supniewski at the newly established Department of Pharmacology, later Institute of Pharmacology of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Prof. S. Misztal’s scientific activity was almost entirely concentrated on the search for and the synthesis of new chemical compounds with an indole structure and a potential action on the central nervous system, as well as on the search for relationships between their structure and biological activity.

At the beginning of his scientific career Prof. S. Misztal devised a method for synthesizing serotonin and melatonin which were at that time (the latter part of the fifties) unavailable in Poland, but necessary for biological and pharmacological research. Derivatives of the latter compound had become shortly afterwards the theme of his doctoral thesis which he defended at the Institute of Bio-
Yielding tetrahydro-β-carbolines in a reaction of tryptamine or its derivatives with pyridoxal was also a matter of great interest. Although compounds of that type did not show any significant pharmacological activity, the above reaction indicated a potential way of synthesizing tetrahydro-β-carbolines in vivo. On the occasion of that synthesis, Schiff bases were also obtained; the latter are intermediate products in Pictet-Spengler reaction which is a basic method of developing tetrahydro-β-carbolines and tetrahydroisoquinolines.

In recent years, the studies in search of ligands of 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> and 5-HT<sub>2A</sub> receptors, conducted under Prof. S. Misztal’s supervision, yielded a number of arylpiperazinylalkyl derivatives of the β-carboline, isoquinoline, indolin-2-one, quinolin-2-one and isoquinolin-1-one systems, many of them showing significant biological activity.

The review papers published by Prof. S. Misztal, concerning serotonin receptor ligands (used as anti-migraine drugs), including ligands of serotonin 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptors, are an invaluable source of information about chemical structures and drugs acting on these receptors.

Besides his search for original chemical compounds acting on various endogenous targets, for which he obtained many patents, Prof. S. Misztal also conducted studies concerned with new methods and modification of the well-known procedures of the chemical synthesis. Some of them have already been mentioned above (the syntheses of serotonin, melatonin, tetrahydro-β-carboline). Moreover, he modified the so-called Abramovitz method in order to use it for the synthesis of different tryptamine derivatives. He elaborated an original, simple and selective method of synthesizing dihydro-β-carbolines, a method of reducing tetrahydro-β-carbolines, and a few others.

His scientific output totals ca 100 publications, including a great many articles published in reputable international journals, numerous presentations at congresses and symposia in Poland and abroad, and the already mentioned patents.

While honoring Prof. S. Misztal’s memory, one should not overlook his achievements in educating young researchers, or in the area of organizing science; nor should one forget his contribution to the Institute’s development. Prof. Misztal was always ready to share his knowledge and wide experience with co-workers and younger colleagues; thanks to it, five of them received doctoral degrees.
and two qualified as assistant professors. In the seventies and eighties, within the then functioning system of financing science, he co-ordinated practically all the studies with novel drugs acting on the central nervous system, conducted in several Polish chemical and pharmacological centres. Later on, in the nineties, he was in charge of a few individual research projects financed by the State Committee for Scientific Research (KBN). He was an active member of the Drug Sciences Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences and vice-president of one of its commissions. He was chosen a number of times a member of Scientific Councils not only at our Institute, but also at other research centres including the Department of Biogenic Amines of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Łódź, or – many times – at the Institute of Organic Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warszawa. As a member of the Editorial Committee of the *Polish Journal of Pharmacology*, he was watching over the quality of papers in the area of medicinal chemistry, published therein. He was a charter member of the Polish Pharmacological Society, and also vice-president of its Kraków branch for a few terms of office.

Prof. S. Misztal’s long-standing work at the Institute of Pharmacology, his very good knowledge of people and problems lurking in our research centre and, above all, his personal talents made him at the end of the seventies an excellent candidate for the post of deputy director for general affairs, which he had been then holding incessantly for 21 years. Those years were difficult enough: at first the Institute’s new establishment at Smętna Street was started to be run, and the Institute itself took on a function of co-ordinator in several central research projects. Later on, there emerged problems connected with coping with the new social and political situation that the domain of science also had to rectify. Irrespective of his scientific work, Prof. S. Misztal had always engaged with great enthusiasm and efficacy in all those problems; moreover, his multi-directional activities in that field had undoubtedly contributed to the Institute’s development at that time. Myself, I feel fully authorized to state this fact, the reason also being that for almost 25 years I had been lucky to co-operate with Stan on very close terms within the Institute’s management, which I always valued very highly.

Prof. S. Misztal’s success and achievements were greatly appreciated not only by his close co-workers. Despite the fact that, being an extremely modest person, he had never aspired to any honors or distinctions, he was awarded several times, among others twice the prize of the Scientific Secretary of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He was also honored, among others, by the Knight’s Cross of the *Polonia Restituta* order and by the Gold Cross of Merit.

The death of Prof. S. Misztal is a severe loss not only to his family, closest friends and our Institute. We have been irrevocably bereaved of an eminent researcher and scientist, and also of an extremely kind and gentle person who was always ready to help others using all his knowledge and experience, a person highly esteemed and much loved. We have lost a man of absolute integrity, who during his whole life was of invaluable service to the Institute, science and other people. A great many of us have been bereaved of one’s best friend and closest companion.

_Edmund Przegaliński_