

In memory of Professor Zbigniew J. Jara (1918–2008)



(Photo: Jara family archives)

On October 11, 2008 in Zagórze (near Sanok, Poland) passed away our dear friend—Professor. Dr hab. Zbigniew J. Jara. For many years he was a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of *Acta Ichthyologica et Piscatoria*. We will remember him as a man of diverse interests and passions—a “Renaissance man of the third millennium” (Lonc 2004b). He loved biology, music, sport, literature, and poetry in particular, and what is important, he actively pursued all these interests.

Zbigniew Jara was a modest, cheerful person of extraordinary personality, an erudite professor, teacher and mentor of several generations of students and young scientists of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Agricultural University of Wrocław and the Zoological Institute, University of Wrocław as well as the external advisor of a number of PhD students in other Polish Universities.

Zbigniew Jara was a man of extraordinary personality. It perhaps goes beyond verbal description, but his way of speaking to people earned him friends not only among his fellow academic teachers but also students and anybody with whom he had a chance to talk. He was a role model for many including the undersigned (W.O. and W.P.)

Zbigniew J. Jara was born 20 December 1918 r. (Tropiło 2009) in Milecza (near Sanok, south-eastern Poland) in a teacher’s family. In 1936 he became a student at the University of Veterinary Medicine (AMW) at Lwów. In 1938, as a 3rd year student, he became a voluntary-assistant of Prof. Dr Waclaw Moraczewski at the Division of Physiological Chemistry and General Pathology. When the 2nd World War started all schools and universities (including AMW) were closed by the occupant. In March 1942 the veterinary school reactivated as „Staatliche Tierärztliche Fachkurse” [State Veterinary Professional Courses]. Zbigniew Jara resumed his studies as well as his association with Prof. Moraczewski and the Department of General Chemistry where he worked as a technical support staff and later as a junior assistant. After graduation he worked in the Municipal Abattoir in Krakow until January 1945. In the meantime he worked as a secretary for the Veterinary College, Faculty of Agriculture, Jagiellonian

University. In June 1945 he moved to the “Festung” Breslau (80% of which was destroyed) (known after the war as Wrocław), as a member of the Polish pioneer Cultural-Education Group led by Professor Stanisław Kulczyński where he actively took part in building the foundations of Polish science and culture. In the early November of 1945, along with the foundation of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the Wrocław University and the Wrocław Polytechnic he became an assistant and later a senior assistant at the Division of Limnology and Fisheries under the supervision of Prof. Marian Stangenberg. He worked there until 1952 teaching fish diseases and their control. He concurrently (1948–1952) studied Biology at the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the Wrocław University and the Wrocław Polytechnic earning the degree of Master of Philosophy (in Biological Sciences). In 1952 Zbigniew Jara became an Assistant Professor in the Division of Epizootiology, Veterinary Faculty, College of Agriculture under supervision of Dr Tadeusz Sobiech. Also in 1952 he defended his doctoral dissertation entitled: “Blood clotting system of carp, *Cyprinus carpio* L.” One of his advisors was Prof. Dr Hugon Kowarzyk. The next important step in his scientific carrier was his “habilitation” (=DSc) based on the thesis entitled “Studies on the mechanisms of thrombogenesis in the blood of carp, *Cyprinus carpio* L.” It should be emphasized that both above-mentioned theses of Zbigniew Jara were fundamental for the haematology of freshwater fishes.

From 1991 Zbigniew Jara, initially as “Dozent” and later as Professor became the head of the Division of Ichthyopathology of the College of Agriculture (which later became the University of Agriculture) in Wrocław. It was the first unit of such profile in the history of Polish universities. One of Professor Jara’s close associates at that time was Witold Olech, DVM. The Division of Ichthyopathology under the supervision of Professor Jara became an informal fish-disease reference centre for south-western and southern Poland. The cooperation with the “field” ichthyopathologists resulted in three doctorates: Bogdan Witała (from Katowice), Feliks Flondro (Poznań), and Danuta Szerow (Wrocław). Subsequent doctorates supervised by Professor Jara were those of Franciszek Markiewicz and Tadeusz Bory-Miączyński, DVM (from Kraków).

From the year 1976 until his retirement in 1989 Professor Jara was the head of the Division of Animal Physiology at the Zoological Institute of the University of Wrocław. Working there he supervised a team of 10 researchers.

The research projects carried out by Professor Jara and his associates represented either applied science or basic research. An example of the former can be the testing of pharmaceutical Cyprimix for treatment of some fish diseases. Some notable examples of his basic research were: “Distribution of alkaline- and acid phosphatase in the alimentary tract of seven freshwater fish species.” or “Studies on the defence mechanisms of fishes using perivital application of trypan blue”. Both projects involved histological and histochemical methods and they lead to interesting conclusions. Unfortunately for technical or financial reasons not all the results of the above-mentioned studies have been published. Another major topic of Professor Jara’s research has been the dynamics of changes of the proteins of common carp within a three-year rearing period.

One of the landmark parasitological papers of Prof. Jara (jointly with Zofia Kozikowska and Eugeniusz Grabda) was the publications on the speciation of copepods based on the example of *Achtheres* in perch and zander. His other studies included the histopathological effects of *Myxobolus* on freshwater fishes as well as that of copepod *Sphyrion lumpi* on a marine redbfish. Furthermore, Professor Jara researched the fungus *Ichthyosporidium (Ichthyophonus) hoferi* in ornamental fishes. In addition, he studied environmental aspects of freshwater fish parasites and the effects of selected pesticides on health of freshwater fishes. The research projects carried out at the time of his tenure at the Division of Animal Physiology were focused on the host–parasite system of selected pathogens of cyprinid fishes (e.g., *Bothriocephalus gowkongensis*, *Khawia sinensis*, *Ligula intestinalis*, *Cisticercus dilepidis campylancistrotae*, resulting in 3 doctoral theses and 23 publications.

Professor Jara published a total of some 180 papers, including 51 full journal articles and 4 academic textbooks. He reviewed over 70 publications and 30 PhD and DSc theses. He was a supervisor of 7 doctorates and 30 master theses.

Professor Jara co-authored a major textbook entitled “Ichtiopatologia” [Ichthyopathology]—the fundamental work originally written by Professor Andrzej Chodyncki who passed away before he had the opportunity to read the review of his book. Unfortunately the excessively long manuscript (over 800 pages) needed extensive editing. This challenge was undertaken by Professor Jara (on request of Prof. Chodyncki’s wife). Within four years of intensive work he shortened the original text, wrote new chapter on general issues of ichthyoparasitology and substantially increased the number of illustrations. The new text emphasized mechanisms of pathogenesis linking them to fish physiology and the role of the aquatic environment.

Moreover, Professor Zbigniew Jara was keenly involved in the management of science, research, and teaching. Between 1963 and 1966 he was the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the College of Agriculture in Wrocław. He was the Secretary of the Management Board of the Polish Zoological Society for a

number of terms (1956–1965) as well as the Deputy Chairman of the Wrocław Branch (1966–1969). For many years (1957–1968) he was a member of the Scientific Board of the Wrocław Zoological Garden. For two terms (1962–1966 and 1974–1977) he was the Chairman of the Wrocław Branch of the Polish Parasitological Society. His other appointments included: the Nicolaus Copernicus Society of Polish Naturalists (since 1945), member of the fisheries experts team of FAO (since 1959); the Wrocław Scientific Society (WSS) (ordinary member since 1967); Chairman of the Biological Branch of WSS (since 1990); Wildlife Disease Association (Canada) (since 1968); Scientific Council of the Institute of Parasitology, Polish Academy of Sciences; Committee of Parasitology, Polish Academy of Sciences.

Professor Zbigniew Jara has been well known for his editorial work: Reports of the Wrocław Scientific Society by Ossolineum (co-editor); *Zoologica Poloniae* (Chairman of the Editorial Board); *Acta Parasitologica Polonica* (member of the Editorial Board), and finally—*Acta Ichthyologica et Piscatoria*. Professor Jara was a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of our Journal since 2001.

The most notable editorial position of Professor Jara was his 17-year-long work as editor-in-chief of *Wiadomości Parazytologiczne* (Złotorzycka 1990, Lonc 2004a). He assumed the editorial duties in 1970, succeeding Prof. Kozar. The Secretary of the journal for 13 years was the undersigned (Witold Olech). Professor Jara cherished “his” journal devoting all his time and effort for maintaining its high standards. Moreover, he actively cared for the “news” aspect of this serial publication (*Wiadomości Parazytologiczne* = Parasitological News) as the publication was meant not only to be a scientific journal but also a chronicle of the Polish Parasitological Society. Professor Jara’s involvement in edited texts was often very extensive. Some articles were in fact totally rephrased and rearranged by Professor. In 1983 *Wiadomości Parazytologiczne* were distributed to a total of 360 libraries worldwide. In response, a number of biological journals were sent in exchange. At that time, because of the lack of hard currency, journal exchanges were the only way to acquire journals from the western countries. Professor Zbigniew Jara was honoured with a number of civil and scientific medals and distinctions.

Professor Jara wrote a number of novels (e.g., *Wrzesień ’39* (2001), and „Listy do matki” (2005), one book („Przyczynek do historii 1939–1945”) and five volumes of poetry („W świetle nocy – światło dnia” (2003), „W pokoju przechodnim” (2004), „Myśli niedokończone” (2005), „Widnokrąg” (2006), „Czas i słowo” (2007) (Tropiło 2009).

He was also a talented musician. He played the violin for over 40 years not only for himself, but also for much wider audiences sometimes playing concerts alongside professional players (Kieraciński 2003).

He liked to take long treks along nature trails and in winter to ski in the Polish mountains. During the war he was a soldier of the underground Polish Home Army (AK).

Professor Zbigniew Jara will be remembered and missed by all who knew him. His great contribution to science will be built upon by future generations. With the loss of Professor Jara, we have lost an incredible scientist, a great mentor, an undisputed visionary, and wonderful friend.

Niech idzie na pola, na łąki, na lasy i na góry muzyka Twojej duszy!

Witold Olech and Wojciech Piasecki

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