

## PROFESSOR JERZY WYROZUMSKI (1930–2018)

Professor Jerzy Wyrozumski, an outstanding medievalist and scholar of Kraków history, long-time President and honorary member of the Society of the Friends of the History and Monuments of Kraków, died on the second of November 2018.

Professor Wyrozumski's merits for Polish scholarship and for Kraków cannot be overestimated. This also applies to his mission of the President of our Society, which he performed with great dedication. Professor Wyrozumski not only devotedly managed the Society for 35 years, but also gave it a wider scope. He offered us his authority, extraordinary conscientiousness and responsibility.

Professor Jerzy Wyrozumski took over the presidency of the Society of the Friends of the History and Monuments of Kraków in May 1980. He was elected by the Board and accepted this function at a particularly difficult time for Kraków and its monuments. The end of the 1970s was a time of a deepening crisis for the city, an ecological disaster being one of its extreme manifestations. The situation in that period, gravely threatening the heritage accumulated in the ancient Polish capital, was at the same time an impulse for civic activities in defence of Kraków and of endangered values. As president of the Society of the Friends of the History and Monuments of Kraków, Jerzy Wyrozumski was one of the most important authorities around which civil society was to be reborn under the Wawel Hill. It was no accident that the beginning of Jerzy Wyrozumski's presidency coincided with the establishment of the Committee for the Protection of the Józef Piłsudski Mound – before the strikes of August 1980 – within the Society. The Committee quickly became a symbol of restoring the social awareness of the heritage that the regime had consistently erased from the collective memory of Poles – the heritage of Polish Independence. The

Committee and numerous other initiatives of the Society during this romantic period of the First Solidarity were also a testimony to its empowerment.

Preservation of the Society's independence during Martial Law is a great personal merit of Jerzy Wyrozumski. At that time, attempts were made to liquidate the Society in order to prevent the renovation of the Józef Piłsudski Mound. Professor Wyrozumski's courage and uncompromising approach in his talks with the authorities of the time met with admiration. He was always armed with the motto of his University: *Plus ratio quam vis*. It also embodied the extraordinary personality of this scholar.

Thanks to its President's determination the Society not only preserved its sovereignty, but also developed various forms of civic activity for the benefit of Kraków. They included the annual sessions of "Kraków in the history of the nation", the new dynamics of *Kraków Yearbook* and other publications of the Society, "Saving from oblivion" competitions or regular monument conservation interventions. In the 1980s, the Society was one of the places where a new philosophy of thinking about Kraków and its heritage was formulated. It was here, at 12 Świętego Jana Street, that regular meetings of experts from the Citizens' Committee were held in the autumn of 1989, during which a new vision of Kraków was born.

The political breakthrough of 1989 enabled the Society to regain, half a century later, its property, namely a historic house on Świętego Jana Street. This battle, crucial for the future of the Society of the Friends of the History and Monuments of Kraków, is one of the greatest successes of Professor Jerzy Wyrozumski's term of office. During his presidency, he served a number of other important public functions, including at the Jagiellonian University and

the reborn Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, while simultaneously contributing such monumental works as the first volume of *Dzieje Krakowa* (History of Kraków) to the research on the history of the city. Incidentally, in 2010 Jerzy Wyrozumski was awarded the City of Kraków Award for his outstanding contribution to this research.

For many years, Professor Wyrozumski's daily public service was divided between two addresses, 17 Sławkowska Street and 12 Świętego Jana Street. He appeared at the latter address every day, at ten o'clock sharp. With a rare diligence, he personally dealt with all the details, even the smallest ones, related to the administration of the Society's affairs. At the same time, over an obligatory coffee – to which he was undoubtedly addicted – he willingly shared his extraordinary knowledge of Kraków with his co-workers. Expanding and disseminating this knowledge was Professor Wyrozumski's passion.

In May 1995, the Kraków City Council awarded Professor Wyrozumski with a silver medal *Cracoviae Merenti*. The resolution includes the following justification:

“Jerzy Wyrozumski, born in 1930 in Trembowla, after the Second World War bound his fate to Kraków. At the Jagiellonian University he went all the way from assistant to full professor. He served the academic community with great dedication as Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and History in the difficult years 1981–1987, and then as Vice Rector in 1987–1990.

As a Cracovian by choice, he had a special love for the royal city. Since 1980, he was President of the Society of the Friends of the History and Monuments of Kraków, which, under his leadership, promoted a wide range of reliable knowledge about the history and contemporary problems of the Kraków agglomeration. Professor Wyrozumski organised a series of academic sessions on the role of Kraków in the history of the Polish nation. He strived to pre-

serve the valuable traditions of Kraków, and supported various institutions in the work of protecting Kraków's monuments”.

As the president of the Society of the Friends of the History and Monuments of Kraków, for over 30 years he was the editor of the prestigious *Kraków Yearbook*. Forty volumes of the “Kraków Library” and thirty-five volumes in the series “Kraków in the History of the Nation” published during his presidency give some idea about the scope of his undertakings. But it was the monumental “Fontes Cracovienses” series that became Professor Wyrozumski's beloved child of editorial passion. His other great passion was the Middle Ages. Pope John Paul II awarded Professor Wyrozumski with the Commandoria of the Order of Saint Silvester for his merits in the canonisation process of Saint Hedwig the Queen. For the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the city's Charter, Professor Wyrozumski prepared a “Kraków Library” volume entitled *Kraków. Nowe studia nad rozwojem miasta* (Kraków: New studies on the development of the city), which constitutes a basic compendium of knowledge about the city. At 12 Świętego Jana Street he was fulfilling his dreams and the dreams of Kraków.

The best testimony to Professor's titanic work is his academic legacy, clearly demonstrated, for example, by the bibliography of his publications from 1995–2018 presented in this volume of *Kraków Yearbook*.

One of the luminaries of the Polish humanities passed away. Always full of dedication. A man of crystal-clear honesty, great goodness and equally great modesty. We said goodbye to him on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November at the Rakowicki Cemetery, where he rested in the Avenue of Merit.

Dear Leszek, thank you!

*Jacek Purchla*