

# In memoriam: Professor Henryka Małdyk

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It is with great sadness that I share the sorrowful news that internal medicine and rheumatology lost a dedicated physician, respected scientist, and wonderful teacher on August 31, 2017, when Professor Henryka Małdyk (FIGURE 1) died in Warsaw after a long-lasting disease. She was an honorary member of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine, as well as a founder and long-standing president of the Rheumatological Committee of the society.

Professor Henryka Małdyk was born on October 28, 1924, in Łódź, Poland. She attended the primary school and the Janina Czapska High School in her home city. After the outbreak of the Second World War, her family was displaced by the Nazi to Pionki, a city in the Radom county. In Pionki, she attended a clandestine high school. She obtained the school-leaving examination certificate in March 1945, and in May of the same year, she was admitted to the School of Medicine of the Łódź University.

Professor Małdyk began her scientific and medical career during the last courses of medical studies. After graduation (1951), she worked at the First Department of Internal Medicine in Łódź under Professor Józef W. Grott, a pioneer in diabetology in Poland. There she obtained a board certification in internal medicine, and in 1963, she defended her PhD thesis entitled “Hepatic function tests including the Grott’s test in patients with relatively compensated diabetes mellitus.” She also worked in diabetes and gastroenterology outpatient clinics (1953–1963) and served as consultant physician in diabetology for the central part of the city of Łódź (ie, she was consulted by general practitioners in more complex cases). She was married to Eugeniusz Małdyk, professor of pathology, and when he was appointed head pathologist in the Institute of Rheumatology in Warsaw, she moved to Warsaw in September 1963, and her further research interest would focus on rheumatology.

Professor Henryka Małdyk started her work in Warsaw as senior lecturer at the Department of Musculoskeletal Diseases in the Institute of Rheumatology under Professor Włodzimierz Brühl. Since 1969, she was head of the Division of Collagen Disorders at the department. In 1972, she obtained the



**FIGURE 1** Professor Henryka Małdyk. A photograph taken by Krzysztof Niesporek in 2006 when Professor Małdyk was awarded the Centenary Medal of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine.

title of associate professor upon presentation of a thesis entitled “Clinical aspects of psoriatic arthritis.” She obtained the titles of extraordinary professor and ordinary professor in 1982 and 1990, respectively. She chaired the Department of Connective Tissue Disorders from 1984 to 1994. She was also the deputy chief executive officer responsible for scientific affairs at the Institute of Rheumatology. In 1994, she was nominated for a position of national consultant in rheumatology (until 1995).

Professor Małdyk was continuously improving her knowledge. She completed several foreign trainings, including those in Prague and Bratislava (1959), Vilnius (1974), Moscow (1975 and 1978), Zurich (1976), Heinola (1975), Bad Abbach (1978), Basel (1983), Jena (1989), Bad Kreuznach (1987), Rome (1979), Napoli (1980), and Milano (1980). She was a talented researcher. Her early studies pertained to diabetes mellitus and disorders of the alimentary tract. She was a pioneer in Polish

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**FIGURE 2**

The Executive Board of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine (ca. 1975). Standing from the left: Marian Tulczyński, Kazimierz Wysocki, Wiktor B. Szostak, Tadeusz Bogdanik. Sitting from the left: Tadeusz Kraska, Jan Dzieniszewski, Kazimierz Jasiński, Edward Rużyłło, Stanisław Kirchmayer, Bohdan Milewski, Henryka Małdyk



research on renal manifestations of diabetes, including Kimmelstiel–Wilson syndrome, diabetic sclerosis of the glomeruli, relation between diabetes mellitus and pregnancy, as well as optimization of management of patients with latent diabetes. Her papers were widely cited in Polish and foreign handbooks of medicine. In her research, she also focused on the treatment of diabetic coma and new medications of the time (chlorpropamide, thioacetic acid, and new forms of insulin).

After moving to Warsaw, Professor Małdyk worked in the field of rheumatic disorders. She described new diagnostic methods for amyloidosis that could be applied to rheumatic patients. She was a pioneer in using rectal mucosal biopsy for detection of amyloid deposits *in vivo*. Later, she was working on various methods of immunosuppressive therapy and its application to the management of systemic connective tissue diseases. She investigated the effectiveness of D-penicillamine and its mechanism of action, including the drug effect on chemotaxis of leukocytes and immune phenomena.

Professor Małdyk was a coauthor of the first Polish diagnostic criteria for systemic lupus erythematosus. Many of her studies were dedicated to cardiac and hepatic involvement in patients with systemic lupus erythematosus. She was also interested in the prognostic value of various autoantibodies in the serum of patients with lupus. She provided evidence for the role of Sm autoantibodies in the diagnosis of this disease. She reported that its mild course and lower risk of developing renal involvement were associated with the occurrence of rheumatoid factor of the IgM class in serum. She also investigated Sjögren syndrome and antiphospholipid antibodies. She authored about 130 papers, including 19 chapters in leading handbooks of rheumatology and internal medicine.

Professor Henryka Małdyk was a talented teacher. She was a supervisor of 6 PhD theses and 1 thesis for the title of associated professor. She was an active lecturer in postgraduate

education. In 1978, she was nominated to the Scientific Council of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, and she was a member of the Physiopathological Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences (1984–1994).

Since early years of professional activity, Professor Małdyk was active in the Polish Society of Internal Medicine. She was a member of the Executive Board (1974–1996; **FIGURE 2**) and was a founder and president of the Rheumatological Committee of the society. She was a liaison officer between the society and the Polish Society for Rheumatology. She organized 13 educational conferences of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine on rheumatology. She was awarded the title of the honorary member of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine on September 13, 1995, and in 2006, she received the Centenary Medal of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine. She was also the secretary general (1972–1980) and president (1988–1996) of the Polish Society for Rheumatology. In 1996, she was elected an honorary member of the society. Professor Małdyk was also a member of the Drug Control Committee of the European League Against Rheumatism, and was active in international cooperation, especially within Central European countries. She was a member of the editorial board of the *Reumatologia* journal.

Professor Henryka Małdyk was predeceased by her husband Professor Eugeniusz Małdyk, a great pathologist, famous for his studies of the connective tissue. They had 2 children, Professor Magdalena Durlik (nephrologist) and Professor Paweł Małdyk (orthopedic surgeon). Also the next generation of the Małdyks is interested in medicine, including the granddaughter. The passing of Professor Henryka Małdyk will be felt deeply by her associates and trainees, as well as by all Polish rheumatologists and internists. However, she will be forever remembered for her legacy in rheumatology as an outstanding scientist, a great mentor, and caring physician.