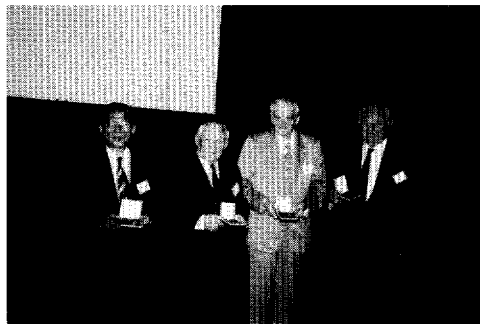


### *Award*

---

The W. Świątosławski Honorary Medal was established by the Polish Society of Calorimetry and Thermal Analysis to honour outstanding scientists who have made long-term contributions to the field of thermodynamics and/or calorimetry and thermal analysis.



Presentation of Świątosławski Medal

The recipients were Professor H. Suga (left), Professor L. Stoch, Professor K. Zięborak and Professor F. Paulik (right)

#### **Short biography** of Professor Wojciech Świątosławski by Professor Kazimiers Zięborak

We are deeply honoured by the award of the Świątosławski Medal by the Polish Society of Calorimetry and Thermal Analysis. I should like to take this opportunity to present a short biography and some remembrances from the 15 years of my collaboration with him. Wojciech Świątosławski was born in Kiriiovka in the Ukraine on June 21, 1881. He died in Warsaw on April 29, 1968. He studied chemistry at Kiev Polytechnic Institute, from which he graduated in organic chemistry and particularly in the chemistry of dyestuffs. In 1908, he published his first scientific paper dealing with the thermochemistry of organic compounds. He continued this trend of research with some collaborators and undergraduate students, first at Kiev University and then in Moscow. There, in 1911, he became Head of the first Thermochemical Laboratory in Russia, which had been founded by Luginin at the University of Moscow. His D.Sc. thesis on "Thermochemistry of Diazo Compounds", presented at Kiev University in 1917, was regarded as an important contribution to the knowledge of the structure of diazo compounds and the stereochemistry of trivalent and pentavalent nitrogen atoms. In 1918, when he came to Warsaw, he had already established a reputation in the scientific community as an excellent thermochemist. In the

period between the First and Second World Wars, Świętosławski worked at Warsaw University of Technology as Head of the Department of Physical Chemistry. He was also Rector of the University and twice Dean of the Faculty of Chemistry. In Warsaw, he extended his field of interest to the very precise ebulliometric methods of measurements. He also worked on microcalorimetry and certain branches of applied chemistry, mainly the physical chemistry of coal and the products of coal utilization. He was very active in both scientific and public life, in the Polish Chemical Society and in the Academy of Sciences. He served as President of the Commission on Physicochemical Measurements and Standards, and for several years he was a Vice-President of IUPAC. From 1935 to 1939, he was Minister of Education of Poland. During the World War Two, Świętosławski went to the USA and first lectured at the Universities of Pittsburgh and Iowa, and then worked as Senior Fellow at Mellon Institute in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In the USA, he published monographs, e.g. "Microcalorimetry", "Ebulliometric Measurements" and some others. He returned to Warsaw in 1946. At first, he taught Applied Physical Chemistry at Warsaw University of Technology, but then became Head of the Department of Physical Chemistry at the University of Warsaw. In 1955, he also became the first Director of the Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Świętosławski published 380 scientific papers (alone or with co-workers), 50 other articles, 18 books and monographs. He was granted 42 patents on his inventions. He promoted several hundreds of graduate students to M.Sc. and nearly a hundred post graduate students to the degree of Ph.D. During his long and creative life, six universities awarded him the title of Doctor honoris causa. He became an Honorary Member of various scientific societies and was awarded scientific prizes and state orders.

I met Świętosławski for the first time in the 1930s. At that time, I was a boy, while he was Head of the Department of Coal in the Institute of Chemical Research in Warsaw. In autumn 1946, when I was an Assistant at the Chair of Mineralogy and Crystallography at Warsaw University of Technology, Świętosławski returned from the USA and started giving his lectures at the same university. I decided to change the direction of my studies from Inorganic technology to physical organic chemistry. I was the first graduated student and the first promoted to Ph.D. by Świętosławski after his return to Warsaw. Afterwards, I worked with his team until 1961, when he retired. I co-operated with him at the Department of Physical Chemistry at the University of Warsaw, and in the Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Świętosławski was always friendly, and outspoken, though sometimes lacking patience. He kept regular hours: he would get up at 5 a.m., begin work at 6 and visit his staff twice before noon. In the afternoon, he would come back again once or twice if some experiments were of special interest to him. Until his retirement, Świętosławski dwelt with his family, i.e. his wife and daughter, in the building of the Faculty of Chemistry at the University of Warsaw. I started lecturing Physical Chemistry in 1952. Świętosławski led the research work and managed the Department and the Institute. My laboratory room was next to Świętosławski's flat, and it adjoined the room in which he worked, which was also his bedroom. Late in the afternoon (at 6), when most employers and the secretary had already left, he would come to me and tell me to switch off my equipment for a while. This was the time when he used to listen to the news on the BBC. He listened to the news in English because the news in Polish was jammed, and my equipment had to be off, as it would have helped jam the English edition, too. A few minutes later, he would return and share the news he had just heard. He also used to recount interesting stories from his life in Russia, the USA, and share memories from the time when he was Minister of Education of Poland. I especially remember that period, during which I learned from him great deal, not only about physical chemistry, for which I am very grateful to him.