

**Professor
Maria Kopeć
(1919-2014)**



Professor Maria Kopeć DMedSc, former head of the Department of Radiobiology and Health Protection of the Institute of Nuclear Research (later transformed into The Institute of Nuclear Chemistry and Technology) passed away on May 13, 2014 at the age of 94.

After the completion of her medical studies, she specialized in haematology. She started to work at the Institute of Nuclear Research in the year of its establishment (1955), from where she moved with a group of other haematologists to the freshly formed Department of Health Protection that soon became the Department of Radiobiology and Health Protection headed by Professor Edward Kowalski. In the field at that time, haemostasis disturbances were known to accompany other post-exposure symptoms; hence, the earliest research topic concerned the mechanisms of ionising radiation effects on blood coagulation and fibrinolysis. This remained Professor Kopeć's main subject of interest during her whole life and she earned an internationally recognised reputation in this research area.

Later, radiation biochemistry and biology research topics were gradually introduced at the Institute. Professor Kopeć became head of the Department after the premature death of Professor Kowalski in 1967. As the department head she supervised several research topics carried out in 4 laboratories, ranging from radiochromatography and radiation biochemistry to cellular radiation biology and radionuclide metabolism. She was a very competent and significant leader, while concurrently granting her co-workers much freedom. She received the title of Professor in Medical Sciences in 1971 and became a corresponding member of the Polish Academy of Sciences in 1976, a full member in 1991. She was the thesis director of 13 research doctorates.

Professor Kopeć was an active member of a number of scientific societies: The Polish Association of Radiation Research (honorary membership), The International Society of Thrombosis and Hemostasis, The International Society of Hematology, The International Committee on Thrombosis and Hemostasis, The European Thrombosis Research Organization, and The Danubian League against Thrombosis and Hemorrhagic Disorder. Her participation in the resistance movement during the war and her scientific contributions have earned her numerous awards, among them The Cross of Merit for Bravery, and The Knight's Cross and Commander's Cross of the Order of Rebirth of Poland. She will be remembered not only for her important contributions in the field of haematology and radiobiology and her high moral and scientific standards but also for her warm personality as well as the ability to create a friendly and creative atmosphere. She will be missed by all who knew her.

Irena Szumiel