

In Memoriam – Professor Witold Gutkowski



1928 – 2019

Professor Witold Gutkowski, our doctoral advisor, teacher, and mentor for many years, passed away suddenly on 18 November 2019 at the age of 91.

Professor Gutkowski was born on 13 September 1928 in Warsaw. As a 16-year-old boy he participated in the Warsaw Uprising, the fall of which began his 3.5-year journey through the wartime and post-war Europe. He was captured and detained in a prisoner-of-war camp first in Germany, and then transferred to one in Austria. After the camp's liberation by the Allied troops at the end of World War II, he enlisted in the Polish II Corps of Anders' Army and subsequently served for several months in Italy. From there he was transported to England with other Polish soldiers and incorporated into the British Army of King George VI. During his stay on the Isles, which extended to 1947, he passed the maturity exam and received a corresponding diploma from the Committee for the Education of Poles in Great Britain. In December 1947 he returned to Poland, resuming education and graduating in 1954 in Mechanical Engineering from the Warsaw University of Technology. In 1960 he spent six months on a scholarship to the Moscow University, working under the supervision of A.A. Ilyushin. The next year he received a Ph.D. from the Warsaw University of Technology for his thesis on *Statics and Stability of Prismatic Lattice Shells*. In 1963 he left the University, where he had been employed since 1950, and joined the Institute of Fundamental Technological Research, Polish Academy of Sciences (IPPT PAN). Two years

later he presented his habilitation thesis on *Two Dimensional Lattice Structures*, and became a full professor in 1976. Since 1972, he served as the Deputy Director for Research at IPPT PAN. He was also the head of the Department of Structural Mechanics at the Institute from 1983 until his retirement in 1998.

Professor Gutkowski conducted most of his research in structural mechanics and optimization. Initially, his main interest lay in the analysis of space trusses, for which he employed the method of difference equations. Later, his attention shifted to discrete structural optimization, which he pursued using several different approaches, including the enumeration method and evolutionary optimization with controlled mutation. He also contributed to developing a very effective approach to minimum weight design based on removing redundant material.

During his years at IPPT PAN, Professor Gutkowski supervised ten Ph.D. theses. He was also invited as a Visiting Professor to the University of Delaware for the academic year 1967/68 and the University of Wyoming in 1981/82. He delivered numerous lectures at several universities in Europe, the USA and Japan. Additionally, in the years 1978–1992 he served as the Editor-in-chief of the “Mechanika i Komputer” (“Mechanics and the Computer”) journal. He became a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences in 1991, a member of the European Academy of Sciences in 2002, and a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2003. He was also elected Chairman of the Committee of Mechanics of the Polish Academy of Sciences in 1987, 1991 and 2007, and a member of the General Assembly of IUTAM. During the 20th International Congress of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics (20th ICTAM) he was invited to serve as the President of the 21st ICTAM, which was successfully held in Warsaw in 2004.

Professor Gutkowski remained an active researcher until his death. We will remember him as a man full of kindness, composure and wisdom, who devoted his life to serving his homeland, and as a distinguished scholar who greatly contributed to high-quality scientific research.

Bartłomiej Błachowski

Paweł Hołobut

Institute of Fundamental Technological Research

Polish Academy of Sciences

Selected works by Professor Witold Gutkowski

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W. Gutkowski, Y.V. Nemirowskiy [Eds], *Mechanics of solids*, [in Russian], Proceedings of Polish-Soviet Symposium, 29–31 October 1974, Novosibirsk, PWN, Warszawa, Ossolineum, 1978.

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