

## Professor Maria Płachecka-Gutowska



On January 14<sup>th</sup> 2018, at the age of 97, prof. Maria Gutowska, *née* Płachecka, passed away.

She was an outstanding physician, rheumatologist and a great Polish patriot. Born August 1<sup>st</sup> 1920, in Lodz, she began attending Emilia Sczaniecka School in 1927. She later studied in Adam Skwarczyński Mathematics and Natural Science Junior High School in Zyrardów. In 1938 she passed high-school exit exam and competition exam for the Warsaw University Medical Faculty, starting her university education.

At the outbreak of 2<sup>nd</sup> World War she volunteered for work in the Zyrardów hospital, where she stayed for almost a year caring for the Polish soldiers wounded in the Battle of Bzura. From 1941 she was taking part in the Polish underground (intelligence unit of the Związek Walki Zbrojnej (ZWZ) – the Union for Armed Struggle), under nom-de-guerre “Dźwina”. At the end of 1941 she was assigned to 23<sup>rd</sup> Platoon of “Kryśka” Battle Group of ZWZ (ZWZ name was changed in 1942 to Armia Krajowa (AK) – Home Army). Her pseudonym changed to “Mulka”. She was a medical orderly instructor. During that time she graduated from the Warsaw Nursing School and finished 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Medical Studies at the underground Western Provinces University (Uniwersytet Ziem Zachodnich). After the fall of the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, she left the devastated capital along with its civilian population and reached her family in Radom.

In April 1945 she returned to studying medicine, beginning her 3<sup>rd</sup> year at the Poznań University. She graduated in 1948. Although she spent first years of her professional career at Lodz, she was tied most of her life with Warsaw. She started her work in the capital in 1953, at the Scientific Institute for Physical Education (Instytut Naukowy Kultury Fizycznej) under the direction of prof. Andrzej Biernacki. From 1962 she worked in the Institute of Rheumatology, in the Hematologic-Metabolic Clinic. In 1966–1967 she was a fellow of a French government’s scholarship, working in Paris under the guidance of prof. Jean Bernard.

During her years in the Institute of Rheumatology, she progressed consecutively through all scientific degrees from doctor of medical sciences to being a full professor. She had not only become a head of a clinic, but also worked in the out-patient healthcare e.g. as a company doctor for the Association of Polish Writers (Związek Literatów Polskich). She was a consultant in the field of hematology for the outpatients clinic of the Institute of Rheumatology. Apart from being a specialist in internal medicine, she also became a specialist in rheumatology, hematology and sports medicine. In the Institute of Rheumatology she was a deputy director for health services. She retired in June 1990.

Professor Maria Płachecka has been decorated with the Polish state awards: Warsaw Cross of the Uprising, Knight’s Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta, Medal of the 40th Anniversary of People’s Poland, Cross of Valour, Home Army Cross. She was promoted to the military rank of a Second Lieutenant. She was an author of a numerous scientific publications, a lecturer, a highly regarded specialist and a person full of kindness and passion,

She was buried on Bródnowski Cemetery in Warsaw on January 29<sup>th</sup> 2018.

### Sources:

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*Maria Maślińska*