

Marian Michniewicz (1922 – 2008)



Professor Marian Michniewicz was born on December 5, 1922 in Vilnius to a family of a railway clerk. He graduated from high school in May 1940. In the autumn of the same year, he began his biological studies at the University of Vilnius. After taking over Vilnius by the Nazis in 1942, he was removed from the university and worked physically for the railway company. In 1943 he joined the Home Army, and from January 1944, as partisan of the III Vilnius Home Brigade "Szczerbiec", fought against the German occupant. After the Bolsheviks captured Vilnius, in order to avoid being arrested by the NKVD in the autumn of 1944, he joined the Polish People's Army. Demobilized in the autumn of 1945, he continued his biological studies at the University of M. Curie Skłodowska (UMCS) in Lublin. In 1948 he obtained a master's degree in philosophy in the field of botany, and in 1951 a doctorate in mathematical and natural sciences. In 1964 he received the title of associate professor, and in 1971 he became full professor.

He began his scientific work in 1946 as a deputy assistant at the Department of Plant Physiology UMCS in Lublin. In 1953 he took over the leadership of the Chair of Plant Physiology UMK in Toruń, where he worked until his retirement in 1991. In the years 1956-1958 he was a deputy dean, and in the period 1958-1961 dean of the Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences, from 1969 to 1978 the first director and organizer of the Institute of Biology. He was a member of numerous scientific societies, including an honorary member of the Polish Botanical Society and a member of the Scientific Society in Toruń. From 1971 he was a correspondent member of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and became a real member in 1986.

Scientific achievements of prof. Michniewicz encompass about 150 publications, including 115 original works. They mainly concern the physiology of growth and development of plants with particular emphasis on the role of the hormonal factor. The scientific achievements also include the co-authorship of a number of books: "Outline of Physiology of Scott Pine" - 1976, "Fusarium, Mycotoxins, Taxonomy and Pathogenicity" - 1989, "Biology of Scots Pine" - 1993.

Cooperation with US scientific institutions, established in 1961 and 1962 during an internship at the California Technical Institute in Pasadena, resulted in obtaining four five-year grants from the Ministry of Agriculture (PL-480 agreement). The research conducted within the framework of this cooperation (1963-1979) mainly concerned the role of the hormonal factor in the growth and development of forest trees, especially the pine tree.

Professor Marian Michniewicz made many foreign scientific trips, especially to the USA and Canada. He participated in many conventions and international symposia and he organized four international symposia devoted to research on plant growth regulators (1959, 1963, 1968 and 1974) in Toruń.

The outcome of prof. Michniewicz's didactic activity included supervision of 229 master's theses, 12 doctoral dissertations and co-authorship of the academic textbook ppt. "Plant Physiology", 1977 and 1984. For his scientific and didactic activity, he received a number of rewards, distinctions and orders, among others, Medal of the National Education Commission (1978), Order of Polonia Restituta, Officer's Cross (1985), and a number of war decorations.

In February 2005, prof. Michniewicz was awarded the "Convallaria Copernicana" distinction by Nicolaus Copernicus University for his exceptional contribution and merit.

Professor Marian Michniewicz died on April 30, 2008.