Professor Zygmunt Zahorski – a memoir

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I have met Professor Zygmunt Zahorski in 1970 when he came to Gliwice from Łódź and started to work in the Institute of Mathematics at the Silesian University of Technology.

It is very tough for me to write about a person who has created the mathematical school. This fact as well as my respectively short acquaintance with Professor are enough to make me weigh carefully my words, especially when the noble Person, I am talking about, is dead and cannot correct my faults.

Professor Zahorski was an outstanding Person, a scientist in the style of epoch which passed away a long time ago. He was characterized by the extraordinary reliability and criticism – too much quite often – for His own achievements. He was also titanicly hard-working and assiduous in pursuing his scientific goals. After obtaining the scientific results of world-wide importance (proof of the Kolmogorov hypothesis on the trigonometric series and some other results), after developing the mathematical school, for several years Professor was hardly involved in a very tough and ambitious mathematical problem concerning the orthogonal series. Although the problem has been solved by another mathematician of equally large calibre – L. Carleson, Professor did not finished his research. He wanted to achieve the set goal independently, especially because he followed a completely different path of investigations. He worked on this problem almost till the last days of his life. He did not manage to solve this, posed to himself, problem.

Professor Zahorski's work had a whiff of some kind of gambling, race against the passing time. He suffered hardly from a heart disease and on 24th October 1980 he survived a clinical death. This experience made him realize – so brutally – fragility of human life. Hence, his multiplied effort to achieve the desired scientific result arose. Unfortunately, he did not make it, he did not manage.

Poor health, terrible living ordeals so often striking the people from Professor's generation, they did not cloud over Professor's good mood. He was a very cheerful person of specific, subtle sense of humor with a great deal of self-irony. Wonderful story-teller! He possessed the extraordinary easiness of speaking. Each of his stories

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contained a lot of digressions. Very often the listeners could have an impression that Professor lost himself in the chain of digressions, that he lost the clue. Not at all! He always came back to his main subject and all these digressions appeared to be an essential and natural supplement of his basic talk.

It seems to me that one of the measures for greatness and exceptionality of a person are the anecdotes connected to this person. There is a lot of anecdotes devoted to Professor.

Professor raised a numerous group of mathematicians occupying important positions at various Polish universities. All of them show the gratitude to their Master. When Institute of Mathematics in Gliwice and Polish Mathematical Society, section in Gliwice, celebrated some jubilees sacrificed to Professor (70th birthday anniversary, 80th birthday anniversary, recognition as the honorary member of Polish Mathematical Society), Professor's alumni and collaborators from Łódź, Gdynia, Warszawa, Wrocław, Kraków and Katowice participated in these ceremonies. They also accompanied Professor on his last journey to the place of his eternal rest.

Professor Z. Zahorski contributed also significantly in developing the silesian mathematical community and especially in creating the scientific centre in Gliwice. Faculty of Mathematics and Physic at the time, Faculty of Applied Mathematics at present, owes greatly its serious development to the inspiration of Professor Zygmunt Zahorski.

Zygmunt Zahorski and Janina Śladkowska-Zahorska