



CONFERENCES

Iridium 192 Award

The award was posthumously given to:



Professor Janusz Skowronek (1964-2018)
Greater Poland Cancer Center
Poznań, Poland

What would this award have meant to Janusz Skowronek?

He would definitely feel pride, satisfaction, and distinction. I am sure he would feel noticed and appreciated by the international brachytherapy community, for which he strived for many years. Undoubtedly, the award would have opened many doors in his career path. In difficult times, Skowronek complained occasionally that he was not very kindly received by his colleagues in Western Europe. This award has changed everything, for which the Polish Brachytherapy Society (PBS) is extremely grateful.

To whom would he have dedicated the award?

Only Skowronek could have addressed this question adequately. However, I am sure that he would have dedicated this award to his excellent department team and the PBS members as proof that it was worth making your dreams come true and moving towards your dream goals in small steps, despite the obstacles and difficulties. All his efforts were aimed to make brachytherapy great again.

What were the highlights of his career?

Janusz Skowronek's career was developing rapidly and in many ways before he became ill. He fell in love with brachytherapy at the start of his career and put all his efforts into creating a brachytherapy department at the Greater Poland Cancer Center in Poznań

(Poland). This was accomplished in 2003 and he developed the centre continuously over years. As gynaecological brachytherapy already had a long history, he introduced high- and pulsed-dose-rate (HDR and PDR) contact (skin), endoluminal (lung, oesophagus, bile duct), and interstitial applications (sarcoma, breast, skin, prostate).

Before this, he achieved his doctoral thesis entitled Assessment of DNA content in malignant melanoma cells in 1996, and then a habilitation thesis entitled HDR and PDR brachytherapy efficacy and toxicity risks based on BED [biologically effective dose] modeling in 2006. Finally, he was conferred the title of full Professor on 4th of March 2015. Before the end of 2018, he had authored and co-authored more than 160 publications (articles, book chapters, guidelines) and had given numerous domestic and external lectures and presentations.

Skowronek was keen to establish a European, although actually international, open-access, professional, scientific journal. After demanding and fruitful preparation, he achieved this, and on the 5th November, 2008, the Journal of Contemporary Brachytherapy (JCB) (www.jocb.eu) was established. For ten years, Skowronek played the role of originator, initiator, propagator, reviewer, paper author, and, most importantly, editor-in-chief of the JCB. He was also a member of many other editorial boards.

Skowronek introduced ultra-low-dose-rate permanent implants (seeds) to a public hospital and fought successfully for their reimbursement for Polish patients.

What were his challenges?

We assume that his health problems in his youth pushed him to study medicine and radiation oncology. However, they cast a shadow on his accomplishments, which may have been much more abundant without these restrictions. However, his visionary mind was full of ideas for the development of local and national brachytherapy in Poland in difficult, transforming times. Most of them came into being and continue to develop.

What was his involvement within and outside the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO)?

Inside ESTRO, he was a member of the Groupe Européen de Curiethérapie (GEC)-ESTRO committee (2013-2018) and the GEC urology working group. In 2007, he co-established the PBS in the role of its Vice-President before becoming its President. He was a chairman of the Polish Oncological Society (the Poznań branch) for eight years and he was an active member of the Polish Radiation Oncology Society, the American Brachytherapy Society, the American Society for Radiation Oncology, the European Society for Hyperthermic Oncology, and the Prostate Cancer Research Study Group.

What will he be most remembered for in the radiation oncology community?

He will be most remembered for his three creations: The Brachytherapy Department, the PBS, and the JCB – all of which prosper (in memoriam). Also, his attitude to young brachytherapy workers will be missed. For them, he was always supportive and helpful, and he set them ambitious goals.



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