

PROF. ZBIGNIEW KOWAL – 60 YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC WORK AND TEACHING



Zbigniew Kowal (born 10 Sept. 1928 in Rivne, Volhynia) – Professor ordinarius of technical sciences, who specializes in metal structures, building structure reliability and theory; former Rector of the Kielce University of Technology.

In 1950, he graduated from the Faculty of Civil Engineering of the Wrocław University of Technology. In the years 1950-1962, he worked at the Central Office for Studies and Designs of the Coal Industry in Wrocław as a designer, the unit head, and from 1954, as the chief engineer–specialist. In the same year, Prof. Kowal started research and teaching work at the Department of Steel Structures of the Wrocław University of Technology. In 1961, he defended the doctoral thesis at the Faculty of Civil Engineering of the Wrocław University of Technology. In 1964, he was awarded the degree of Doctor habilitated of technical sciences at the Faculty of Civil Engineering of the Warsaw University of Technology. In 1972, he was awarded the title of Professor extraordinarius, and in 1978, that of Professor ordinarius. Prof. Kowal is considered to be the person who established the Wrocław academic community [*Wrocławskie Środowisko Akademickie. Twórcy i ich uczniowie 1945-2005*, p. 545, Ossolineum, Wrocław 2007].

In the years 1969-1980, Prof. Kowal headed the Committee of Metal Structures of the Wrocław branch of the Polish Union of Construction Engineers and Technicians (PZITB); he was one of the founders of the above-mentioned body. In the years 1974-1979, he was a secretary to the Committee of Construction and Mechanics of the Wrocław branch of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN). Since 1982, Prof. Kowal has been a member of the Committee of Civil Engineering of the PAN.

Since 1981, Prof. Kowal has been employed at the Kielce University of Technology. In 1984 he organised the Department of Metal Structures and Structure Theory (pres-

ently called the Department of Structure Mechanics, Metal Structures and Computer Methods). Under the leadership of Prof. Kowal, the Poland's largest set of metal structure models, applied to teaching, was developed at this unit.

In the years 1982-1984, Prof. Kowal was a member of the General Council for Higher Education, and in the years 1990-1996, of the Committee for Academic Titles and Degrees. Prof. Kowal served two terms of office, 1981-1984 and 1990-1993, as the Dean of the Faculty of Civil Engineering of the Kielce University of Technology.

In the years 1984-1990, i.e. for two terms of office, Prof. Kowal was the Rector of the Kielce University of Technology. During that time, he established the Centre for Polish Language Learning for Foreigners, the Environmental Engineering field of study, and the specialisation of Computer Science. Following the initiative of Prof. Frąckiewicz, Prof. Kowal affiliated the branch of the Technology Development of the Institute Fundamental Technological Research of the PAN with the Kielce University. Prof. Kowal's work contributed to the reinforcement of the University's academic staff resources. During his terms of office, the computerisation of the University started. That was possible due to the funds generated from training foreigners at the University.

In the years 1994-1999, Prof. Kowal also worked at the Częstochowa University of Technology, where he was the Dean of the Faculty of Civil Engineering in the years 1997-1999.

For his outstanding achievements in research, teaching and design, Prof. Kowal has been awarded numerous distinctions and honours of the highest rank, conferred on him by the state institutions, governmental departments, associations and regional bodies. The distinctions include the *Knight's Cross* and the *Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland*. Prof. Kowal's name is found in entries in many encyclopaedia-type publications, including the following: *The Golden Book of Science 2000*, *Scientists of the Turn of the Century*, Helion Publishers, *Encyclopedia Actus Purus*, *Biographical Encyclopedia Who is Who in Poland*, Swiss Publisher Huebners Who Is Who.

Until the end of 2013, Prof. Kowal had 15 university course books and monographs published. Prof. Kowal is the author of 345 published research and research-technical papers. The studies focused on capacity and stability of thin-walled structures, reliability and safety of structural systems, the ultimate strength limit, structure dynamics and creeping buckling, spatial structure systems, random properties of spatial structures, interactions of complex loads, stochastic structural mechanics, energy-active structures, stability of fibre composite bars, and others. Prof. Kowal was granted 24 patents and nine registered designs. He was the supervisor of 22 defended doctoral theses (including 11 that were awarded with distinction). Prof. Kowal wrote about 50 reviews of doctoral theses, several reviews of habilitation dissertations and several reviews for the purpose of professorship awarding.

In recognition of Prof. Kowal's outstanding research achievements, his name was entered (number 0026/1) into *The Golden Book of Science 2000*, *Scientists of the Turn of the Century*.

Marek Iwański