

ORIGINAL PAPER

Professor Antoni Hlavaty – an outstanding orthopaedic surgeon and scientist from Gdańsk. In celebration of his 98th birthday

Profesor Antoni Hlavaty – wybitny gdański chirurg-ortopeda i naukowiec.
W 98. rocznicę urodzin

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Abstract

The paper presents the private, professional and scientific life of an important Gdańsk's orthopaedic surgeon and scientist, Professor Antoni Hlavaty, the head of the Clinic for Orthopaedics of Medical Academy of Gdansk in 1967-1990, who in April 2018 will be 98 years old. We remember the sporting – and cultural interests of Professor and the achievements of his son and his grandchildren.

Key words: biography of Professor Antoni Hlavaty, history of the orthopaedics and traumatology in Gdańsk, medicine in Gdańsk.

Streszczenie

Wstęp. W pracy przedstawiono prywatny i zawodowo-naukowy życiorys wybitnego gdańskiego chirurga-ortopedy i naukowca, profesora Antoniego Hlavatego, w latach 1967-1990 kierownika Katedry i Kliniki Ortopedii Akademii Medycznej w Gdańsku, który w kwietniu 2018 r. ukończy 98 rok życia. Wspomniano o sportowych i kulturalnych zainteresowaniach Profesora oraz o osiągnięciach jego syna i wnucząt.

Słowa kluczowe: : biografia profesora Antoniego Hlavatego, historia gdańskiej ortopedii i traumatologii, medycyna w Gdańsku.



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Introduction

Prof. Antoni Hlavaty, M.D., Ph.D., Head of the Department of Orthopaedics at the Gdańsk Medical Academy from 1967 to 1990, will turn 98 years old on 27 April 2018. This is a good opportunity to remember the story of the private, professional and academic life of the doyen of orthopaedics and traumatology of locomotor system in Gdańsk and all of Poland (Fig. 1).

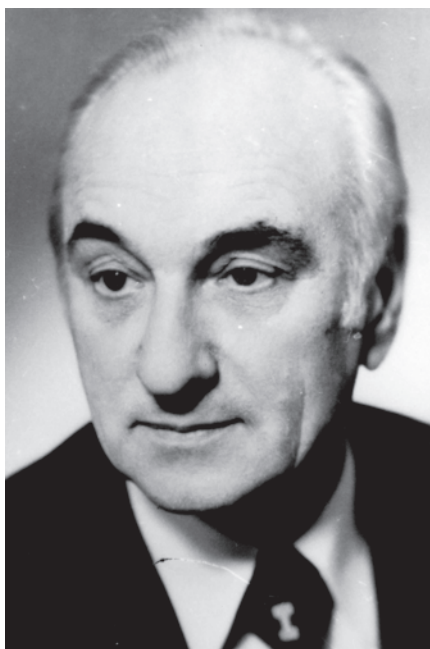


Fig. 1. Prof. Antoni Hlavaty in the 1980s.

Background, childhood and early youth

Antoni Hlavaty was born on 27 April 1920 in Kołomyja (now Kolomyia, a city of about 68,000 people in the Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast in western Ukraine) in a patriotic family of Polish intellectuals. His surname, however, may indicate Czech or Slovak roots, as the word “hlava” means “head” in these languages (in Polish, “Hlavaty” would be “Głowaty”). Such surnames became increasingly common in Polish society after the region was annexed by Austria in 1772 [1]. It is worth mentioning, however, that the famous robber chieftain, Fedor Hlavaty, the terror of Slovakia, Hungary and Subcarpathia, was pillaging the Przemyśl area as early as the second half of the 15th century. We do not know whether he was related by blood to the Professor’s ancestors.

Antoni Hlavaty’s grandfather, Franciszek, was an engineer; a narrow-gauge railway builder. Franciszek’s brother was the principal of a renowned Polish Middle School in Kołomyja for many years. Antoni’s parents were Karol Józef Hlavaty (1884-1955), a lawyer and head of the

Municipal Court in Kołomyja [2, 3] and Maria Józefa née Skupniewicz (1884-1978). Antoni’s younger brother, Lesław Hlavaty (1924-2011), was a veterinarian. At the time of the Professor’s birth, Kołomyja was a county seat in what was then the Stanisławów Province. The city was chartered under the Magdeburg Law by Casimir III the Great between 1366 and 1370 [4] on the territory of the former Principality of Galicia-Volhynia (Galicia). The king also brought the first Jewish settlers to the city. In 1772, Kołomyja became part of Austria as Kolomea after the First Partition of Poland. It was the main city of the so-called Pokuttya [*Pokucie*] (a historical region on the upper Prut and Cheremosh rivers, including the town of Kutu) and Hutsulshchyna, located at the foot of the long Eastern Carpathian mountain range. In 1629, due to numerous Turkish invasions and frequent flooding from the Prut river, the town was moved from the left bank of the river to the higher right bank, where a castle had already been built [5].

In 1913 Kołomyja had approximately 45,000 inhabitants, including 20,000 Jews, 15,000 Poles, 9,000 Ruthenians/Ukrainians and 1,000 Germans. In 1920 the city once again became part of Poland. In 1938 it was home to approximately 19,000 Jews, 13,500 Poles, 9,500 Ukrainians, 2,500 Germans, as well as some Armenians, Hungarians and other nationalities. Almost all local trade was in the hands of Jews, mainly orthodox Hasids, who gave the city its unique, exotic atmosphere. Many tourists would come to Kołomyja and the Prut river for curative purposes, as well as to see Hasidic Jews in an ecstatic trance during their fast-paced dance (modeled after a Hutsul dance called “*kołomyjka*”) and listen to their joyful songs. Kołomyja was a city of enormous contrast, where worldliness met with provincialism and the Polish language mixed with Ukrainian, Russian, Yiddish, German, French, English (the surrounding oil wells were managed by Englishmen), Hungarian and Romanian. After the outbreak of the World War II, between 1939 and 1941, many local Poles were deported to the East by the Soviets or died at the hands of the Ukrainian nationalists. The ordeal of the Jewish population began after the German invasion. In the autumn of 1941, the Germans, helped by Banderites (Ukrainian extremists), murdered a large number of Jews in the nearby forests near the village of Szeparowice. 16,000 Jews from the Kołomyja ghetto died in 1943 in the Bełżec extermination camp near Lublin [6].

Growing up in a multicultural melting pot, young Antoni, besides his native Polish, also mastered Russian, Ukrainian and German, which may have saved his life later on. In 1930, he graduated from a 4-grade primary school in his hometown. He later graduated from the 8-grade King Casimir Jagiellon Middle School, obtaining his matriculation certificate [*matura*] in 1938. Since his dream was to become a pilot, he completed a sailplane course in July of the same year and applied for admission to the Eaglets’ Aviation

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School in Dęblin. He was not admitted to the school as a result of an intervention by his parents, who opposed the idea [2]. In August of 1939, in the face of the imminent war, Hlavaty was assigned to the anti-tank artillery unit of the 11th Carpathian Infantry Division as a cadet (Fig. 2) and was sent to the front on 1 September. On 17 September his unit became trapped between Soviet and German armies. He decided to give himself up to the Soviets. Shortly after being arrested with a group of Polish officers, he was released owing to his fluency of Russian and Ukrainian. He was very lucky. As it later turned out, all of the officers from his group were transported to Katyń, where they were murdered. Walking along back roads in civilian clothes, he reached Lviv and on 10 October 1939 returned to Kołomyja, where his parents awaited him.



Fig. 2. A. Hlavaty wearing a cadet uniform in 1939.

World War II and medical studies in Lviv, Lublin and Poznań

After Galicia was taken over by the Soviets, the Hlavatys avoided persecution mainly because Karol Hlavaty, who spoke Polish, Russian, Ukrainian and German, was urgently needed by the Bolsheviks (NKVD) to translate documents [2]. Antoni's attempts to enroll in medical studies in Lviv initially failed due to his father's past in the judiciary. In the interim, in order to be in contact with medicine, he began working in a hospital as a porter. In the summer of 1941, Lviv and Kołomyja were taken over by the Germans and incorporated into the so-called General Government for the Occupied Polish Territories (*Generalgouvernement für die Besetzten Polnischen Gebiete*), dependent from Nazi Germany. Only then, in 1943, did Antoni become a medical

student, being one of the few Poles among the Ukrainians. The lectures and classes were conducted in German. After the Germans withdrew in 1944, Galicia was once again seized by the Red Army. The Soviets were looking for translators among students of the University of Lviv. The 20 selected candidates, including Antoni Hlavaty, were loaded onto a truck and driven through Przemyśl to a place near Baranowo, where they were drafted into the Red Army, handed rifles, directed to the front and ordered to fight against Germans. Memories from that period alone merit a separate article. Fortunately, in December 1944, Hlavaty was discharged from the army and went to Lublin where quite by chance, he met Prof. Ludwik Hirszfeld, Vice-Rector of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, who wrote him a recommendation letter to the university on a piece of paper from an UNRRA package. Hlavaty became a medical student at the Department of Military Medicine and received credit for his year of study in Lviv. In Lublin, he completed his second and third year of study. It was then that he met his wife Bożena, also a medical student (Fig. 3). They both moved to Poznań, where they continued their studies and received their medical doctor's diplomas. They married in 1948 and moved to Gdańsk in May 1949. Dr Bożena Hlavaty initially worked at the Department of Internal Medicine of the Gdańsk Medical Academy, led by Prof. Stanisław Wszelaki. There, she obtained the second degree of specialisation in internal medicine. Later, she continued working at the Rheumatological Hospital in Sopot under the supervision of dr Jadwiga Titz-Kosko.



Fig. 3. Lieutenant Bożena Michalska and cadet Antoni Hlavaty as medical students in Lublin, 1946.

Antoni Hlavaty's professional and academic work in Gdańsk

After settling in Gdańsk, on 1 July 1949, Hlavaty began working as an assistant at the Paediatric Surgery and Orthopaedics Department of the Physician Academy (Medical Academy since 1950). The Head of the Department

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was the then-Assistant Professor (Professor since 1953) Alojzy Maciejewski (1904-1987). He obtained his specialisation degree in paediatric surgery in 1953. On 1 January 1955 the Department was split into the Department of Paediatric Surgery, which was incorporated into the Faculty of Paediatrics, and the standalone Department of Orthopaedics (initially only for children), led by Prof. Zygmunt Ambros (1907-1963) from Warsaw. Both Departments were located on the premises of the Nicolaus Copernicus City Hospital (later Regional Hospital) in Gdańsk [2, 7, 8, 9]. Ambros's unique personality and his scientific and professional achievements captivated Hlavaty, and he decided to remain in the Department of Orthopaedics. There, in 1955, he became a second-degree specialist in orthopaedics and trauma surgery. He also completed an internship of several months at the Department of Orthopaedics in Poznań, under the guidance of Prof. Wiktor Dega. In 1960 he defended his doctoral thesis titled "Surgical treatment of the paralytic foot." His supervisor was Prof. Alfons Senger (1915-1991), then Head of the Department of Orthopaedics in Gdańsk. Four years later, he was awarded a postdoctoral degree [*doctor habilitowany*] for his thesis titled "Experimental and clinical studies on potential prevention of adhesions after tendon suturing." After Prof. Senger left for Poznań on 15 October 1967, Hlavaty, then assistant professor, was appointed Head of the Academic and Clinical Department of Orthopaedics at the Gdańsk Medical Academy. It was a post he would hold until his retirement on 30 September 1990. In 1974 he was appointed *profesor extraordinarius*, and in 1984 he became a full professor. As Head of the Clinical Department of Orthopaedics, Hlavaty oversaw the creation of the Hand Surgery Department (1979), the University Hand Surgery Clinic (1982), and the University Back Pain Relief Clinic (1984). He co-authored "Zarys ortopedii ogólnej" (*An Outline of General Orthopaedics*), a handbook edited by Prof. Z. Ambros, and was a founding member of the Hand Surgery Unit within Polish Society of Orthopaedics and Traumatology (*Polskie Towarzystwo Ortopedyczne i Traumatologiczne*). The department team published 321 research papers under Hlavaty's direction. He himself published 61 [2], mostly concerning hand reconstruction surgeries, diseases and disorders affecting the hip joint, and spine pathologies. Based on his own research, Prof. Hlavaty specified guidelines for tendon transplants in cases of foot muscle weakness resulting from poliomyelitis. In further studies, he developed a method for preventing adhesions after tendon suturing, as well as popularised primary suturing and free tendon transplants in cases of traumatic flexor carpi tendinopathies. Prof. Hlavaty also introduced a safer threaded distraction rod as a replacement for the original ratchet rod in Harrington instrumentation. With Hlavaty as Head, the Department also did research on trapezoidal resections in treating gradually developed slipped capital femoral epiphysis, the use of fibular

transplants together with intramedullary nails in treating femoral shaft fractures, as well as on stable osteosynthesis of fractures of the long bones, and two-part hip arthroplasty. In 1984, Prof. Hlavaty was first to publish the results of surgical treatment of degenerative spondylolisthesis, in Poland. [8, 10]

Prof. Hlavaty supervised 5 postdoctoral theses (J. Burka, J. Szczekot, M. Teleszyński, W. Dunaj, St. Mazurkiewicz,) and 21 doctoral theses (M. Laskowski, A. Ożga, K. Czerepak, E. Gładkowska-Bogotko, St. Mazurkiewicz, T. Wiśniewski, J. Peszkowski, Z. Borkowski, R. Okoniewski, A. Switoński, M. Mickiewicz, W. Wojtasik, E. Normant, M.T.W. Grabowski, A. Smoczyński, A. Antonowicz, B. Baczkowski, J. Walerych, M. Krzemiński, R. Ostojski, K. Kolarz). He also reviewed 12 postdoctoral theses, 15 doctoral theses and 14 motions for granting the title of professor. Under his guidance, 26 physicians became first-degree specialists in orthopaedics and trauma surgery, and 27 students became second-degree specialists in this field. Antoni Hlavaty had been a member of the Polish Society of Orthopaedics and Traumatology since 1952. In 1992, he became an honorary member of the Society

Professional and academic positions held in medical institutions, and honours awarded to Prof. Hlavaty

Prof. Antoni Hlavaty served as an orthopaedics and traumatology consultant for the Bydgoskie and Gdańskie provinces, in 1961-1968 and 1968-1982 respectively. From 1983 to 1990, he was a representative of a National Supervision Authority for orthopaedics and traumatology for Northern Poland. In 1967-1979 he was the President of the Gdańsk Branch of the Polish Society of Orthopaedics and Traumatology. He was also the Secretary of the Society's Management Board in 1954-1958 and its Vice-President in 1978-1982. In 1966-1975 Prof. Hlavaty served as Vice-President of the Society's Hand Surgery Unit, and was a member of the International Federation of Societies for Surgery of the Hand. He also belonged to the Polish Medical Association, the Gdańsk Scientific Society, and the editorial board of the "Chirurgia Narządów Ruchu i Ortopedia Polska" journal (*Surgery of the Motor Systems and Polish Orthopaedics*). In 1976 the memorable scientific convention of the Society in Gdańsk was held. Prof. Hlavaty, in all his modesty, would never fight for any titles, academic accolades or orders. However, he would not shirk taking duties and responsibilities in significant times either. In the summer of 1982, 8 months after martial law was introduced, Prof. Mariusz Zydowo was dismissed from his post as the then-Rector of the Gdańsk Medical Academy, and his duties were taken over by Prof. General Wiesław Łasiński of the Military Medical Academy in Łódź. After the latter left Gdańsk, the



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state and administrative authorities asked Prof. Barbara Krupa-Wojciechowska, an internist, to manage the Academy until the next elections. Then, in 1984, amidst social and political tensions, Prof. Hlavaty, known for his fairness and integrity, was elected the new Rector of the Academy by a large majority of votes. However, as his candidates for the Academy's governing bodies were not accepted by the officials of the Polish United Workers' Party [PZPR], Prof. Hlavaty stepped down, and Prof. Krupa-Wojciechowska succeeded him. Thus Prof. Hlavaty's administrative career came to an end, and it was a career which, after all, he had never sought. Following his retirement in 1990, he would still be employed as a part-time consultant at the Outpatient Orthopaedic Clinic, and for two terms (1990-1997) he would also be active in the Medical Council in Gdańsk, as a screener for professional liability. [2, 11]

Prof. Hlavaty has received such accolades as the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta, the Medal of the Commission of National Education, as well as a medal of merit for his contribution to the Gdańsk Medical Academy. He was also awarded a medal of merit for his contributions to Polish orthopaedics and traumatology on the 60th anniversary of the Academic and Clinical Department of Orthopaedics that took place in 2013, and, further, a laurel wreath for his contributions to the field of hand surgery (*Laur Chirurgii Ręki*) at the 8th Congress of the Polish Society for Surgery of the Hand in September 2015 [12]. Additionally, in 2003 he received a medal commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Polish Mountaineering Association for his achievements in alpinism.

Other passions of Prof. Hlavaty

Having lived in Kołomyja, Prof. Hlavaty has had a close connection with the mountains ever since his early childhood, and he would be fascinated by the wild and picturesque nature of the Eastern Carpathians, as well as the highlander folklore of the Hutsuls. In the early 1950s, when he was already residing in Gdańsk, he became involved in hiking and mountain climbing – first in the Tatras, and later in the Alps. In 1966, he took part in an expedition to climb the Matterhorn. He was a founding member of the Tricity Mountaineering Club (KWT), its President between 1959 and 1969, and he is now an honorary member of this thriving society. In his climbing endeavours, Prof. Hlavaty was sometimes accompanied by his wife, dr Bożena Hlavaty (Fig. 4). Both also shared a passion for music. Prof. Hlavaty is a connoisseur of music and plays the violin, and his wife was a highly talented musician who, prior to pursuing an academic career in medicine, had graduated from a music conservatory where she studied cello performance and had given many concerts. The couple went on road trips through

Europe whenever they could, visiting numerous towns with their historical landmarks and museums, and going to the opera. Their son, Krystian Piotr, also joined them in trips to Italy, Switzerland, France, and Spain. Given their rather limited financial resources under the socialist regime, they often had to use their own tents and stay at cheap camping sites [2]. It is worth noting that Prof. Hlavaty also has an impressive and comprehensive knowledge of the humanities, literature and art. His interests include Catholic philosophy, theology and medical ethics, and he sees Pope John Paul II, who was also a mountain lover, as his spiritual model [13].



Fig. 4. Mr. and Mrs. Hlavaty on a ridge in the High Tatras, summer 1955.

Family life and children

Professor Hlavaty's wife, Bożena née Michalska (1920-2006), the daughter of Edmund and Cecilia, was born in Szamotuły, where she received her matriculation certificate. During the war she was resettled with her family to Warsaw. She took part in the Warsaw Uprising as a member of Special Task Group "Hanka" of the Union of Armed Struggle (ZWZ) (later renamed as the Home Army – *Armia Krajowa*). At the end of the war she joined the Polish Army to avoid persecution and as a lieutenant she was sent to study medicine at the Department of Military Medicine in Lublin. That is where she met Antoni Hlavaty. Later, they studied together in Poznań where they got married in 1948. In 1949, after graduating, they settled in Gdańsk. In 1998, they celebrated the 50th anniversary of their marriage with their family. Dr Bożena Hlavaty passed away in 2006. Their son, mgr inż. Krystian Piotr Hlavaty [13] (born on 25 October 1950 in Gdańsk), graduated from middle school no 2, (II L.O.) in Wrzeszcz, in 1969, and in 1975 he graduated from the Faculty of Hydro-Engineering at the Gdańsk University of Technology. His wife, Olga Katarzyna née Zardecka (born in 1950), is the daughter of Bronisław and Krystyna, and is too a graduate of the Faculty of Hydro-Engineering at the Gdańsk University of Technology (1974) specialisation in sanitary engineering.



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For a few years she worked in a design office. Since 1979 she has been a homemaker.

From 1976 to 1985, Krystian Piotr was a research assistant at the Gdańsk University of Technology. He then founded a private construction company. Currently he owns a polystyrene foam production plant. He is a pioneer of windsurfing in the Tricity and a well-known organizer of yachting events. Since 1995, he has been a commodore (president) and since 2003 he has been the manager of the Sopot Sailing Club [13,14] which is known for its outstanding achievements. It is one of the best windsurfing clubs in Poland, in Europe and in the whole world. The Club has nurtured many Polish windsurfing champions as well as Olympic medalists. Krystian Piotr Hlavaty is a member of the board of the Polish Yachting Association, where he acted as the sports management vice-president and held other posts. In July 2012, he received the Gold Cross for Merit for "Outstanding contribution to the development and popularization of yachting as well as for his sports achievements" from President Komorowski. He received the honour of "Pomeranian Organizer of Yachting of the 50th Anniversary of Pomeranian Yachting Association" (2016) and many others. Krystian passed his love of water sports, especially windsurfing, onto his children. His daughter, Marta Bożena Hlavaty-Orłowska, (born on 31 March 1983 in Gdynia) graduated from middle school no. 1 in Gdynia (I L.O.) She then graduated from the Faculty of Recreation and Tourism at the Gdańsk University of Physical Education and Sports. She was named Polish Sailor of the Year 2009 and was a multiple Polish and world champion in the Formula Windsurfing class (racing along a specially marked route). She also practiced dancing. Since 2009, Marta has been managing the Water Sports Center in Porto Botte in Sardinia, Italy. Her twin sons, Jan and Krzysztof, were born in 2010 [13]. The son of Krystian Piotr, Paweł Patryk Hlavaty (born on 29 July 1979 in Gdańsk) is a graduate of middle school no. 1 (I L.O.) in Gdynia and the Gdańsk University of Physical Education and Sports, where he studied Physical Education and Coaching. From 1994 to 2010 he was a top windsurfing competitor and since 2009 he has been a windsurfing and

yachting coach at the Sopot Sailing Club. In 2002-2012 he worked in the Sailing section of the Gdańsk University of Physical Education and Sports. He has three children: Julia (born in 2002), who is a windsurfing junior in Sopot Sailing Club, and twins Jakub and Kacper (born in 2006) [13]. Currently Prof. Antoni Hlavaty has two grandchildren and five great-grandchildren (Fig. 5).

Conclusion

Professor Antoni Hlavaty is fortunate to have been blessed with the gift of longevity, which is rather rare among surgeons, even though life didn't spare him any kind of "adventures" and perils, all of which are fit to be made into a film. The fact that he usually escaped them unharmed, professor Hlavaty ascribes to "the extraordinary protection of the Divine Providence." His personality was formed primarily by the warm, cultured, and patriotic atmosphere of his family home, the multilingual and multicultural environment of his youth, the knowledge he gained in the Polish King Casimir Jagiellon Middle School in Kołomyja, the dramatic war experiences, the difficult post-war years, as well as many years of strenuous professional and academic work in Gdańsk. He claims that he did not consider his mountain climbing endeavours to be a competitive sport, but a recreation and a way to cultivate courage and other qualities that are required during surgeries [2]. Professor Hlavaty devoted over 50 years of his eventful life to medicine. He managed the Department of Orthopaedics at the Gdańsk Medical Academy for over 23 years. It was thanks to professor Hlavaty and assistant professor J. Szczekot (both coming from Galicia) that the department had a truly familial and collegial atmosphere. Under their guidance we regularly went on daylong or weekend camping trips by the lake, in the beautiful Kashubian woods. There we played football, went for walks, swam, roasted sausages over the campfire, we sang and, well, we drank a bit. Those trips to "the great outdoors" were great opportunities for casual and honest conversations as well as for defusing tensions or conflicts which, from time to time, naturally arise within any team. All anniversaries, successes and promotions of the management of the department or the assistant lecturers were celebrated together, usually in "The Copernicus Club" in the basement of our hospital (Fig. 6). Professor Hlavaty taught many generations of young doctors not only to be excellent specialists, but also to be valuable people possessing high moral virtues. His pupils, including the authors of this article, still consider the professor to be a model of a great doctor and a noble knowledgeable man of exceptional conduct. He taught us not only orthopaedics, but also an ethical approach to patients as well as humility towards life and death [15].



Fig. 5. The great-grandchildren of Prof. A. Hlavaty, left to right: Kacper, Jakub, Julia, Krzysztof and Janek.



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Fig. 6. Prof. A. Hlavaty among the members of the department team after his appointment as associate professor, Gdańsk, 1974.

The following excerpt is from the October 2017 issue of *Gazeta AMG* in which Prof. J. Suchorzewska and dr L. Birn published professor Hlavaty's current thoughts on the medical profession [16]:

“Medicine is not only a complex system of medical sciences, but it is also an art. Both as a science and as an art it intertwines with ethics. This is why medicine is placed so high in the axiological hierarchy of professions. The medical profession is a taxing test of moral eligibility. The physician cannot be indifferent to the moral values and their hierarchy. The obligation to vest a spiritual dimension in their professional work and develop their humanity is considered to be the best asset of doctors. This means that one should always be polite and kind, which makes the patient feel like a human being surrounded by sympathetic people. There is no medicine without the sacred sphere. The departments, the hospitals, and especially the operating room should be considered a “holy land” because all the actions performed there entail that the other person is a subject, and not an object of those actions. This is the place where the patient has to sacrifice something and the doctor has to prove his or her devotion and love. The patient offers the suffering as a sacrifice, whereas the doctor offers his or

her actions as a sacrifice, which involves medical knowledge and compassion. The medical knowledge and compassion unite those two human sacrifices in the struggle for the most valuable thing, i.e. health. The operating room in particular is the place where the doctors become conscious of their calling, they come to know themselves, their inner lives, their abilities and their inadequacy. That is why one should enter the operating room as if it were a temple, without selfishness, pride, or conceit. One should enter the room prepared and purified, humble and quiet.”

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Dear Professor! We wholeheartedly thank you for your outstanding contributions to orthopaedics and traumatology in Poland and especially in Gdańsk, to the Gdańsk Medical Academy and to your students. You will forever be a great authority figure to us as a doctor, a scientist and a human being. On your 98th birthday we wish you health, energy, optimism and agility.

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