

Reminiscence of Leszek Skolasiński

On 13 July 2019, Leszek Skolasiński Msc. passed away. Aside from his family, the funeral held on 29 July at the cemetery in Marysin Wawerski in Warsaw was attended by a large group of subordinates, co-workers and supervisors of the deceased. They wished to express their respect and fondness for a man of passion, highly committed to issues he was entrusted with, both at work and in his private life, as well as being very friendly and helpful to people he met.

In 1954, Leszek Skolasiński graduated from Gdańsk University of Technology completing full-time studies in the Faculty of Mechanics with a specialization in the construction of metal working machines – and in 1968 Warsaw University of Technology – part-time studies in the Faculty of Mechanics, specialization: organization, economics and planning. Once he had completed his studies in Gdańsk, he took up a job in Zakłady Naprawcze Taboru Kolejowego in Bydgoszcz, currently PESA, as head of the Mechanical Department. In further years, he performed the role of deputy to the head technologist. Upon the order of the ZNTK union, he spent the last period of employment in ZNTK organizing the Trade Work Standardization Center and implementing technically justified norms. In 1991, as an outstanding railway engineer, he was transferred to the Ministry of Communication and appointed as head of the Ministerial Work Standardization Center. He soon organized it and formed a modern unit which provided substantive support to the ministerial management in implementing NTU in repair and construction plants.

In 1969, upon the application of the research council, the Minister of Communication appointed L. Skolasiński as head of the Main Center for Research and Development of Railway Techniques (COBiRTK) (currently the Railway Research Institute). He held this position for 15 years. During this time the center was enriched with a modern – back then – research apparatus, whereas the employment rate rose substantially (especially with experienced researchers and independent scientific workers). The position of COBiRTK became stronger in relation to domestic and foreign research and development centers. When it comes to foreign research centers, close and fruitful cooperation was initiated with the All-union Railway Research Institute in Moscow and British Railway Research Center in Derby. In the 1970s, he contributed to the conclusion of the agreement for cooperation between ministerial research centers and the PKP central IT center, which resulted in the exchange, of experiences and initiation of joint projects.

In 1982 he returned to the Ministry of Communication to work as head of the Department of Cooperation Abroad. Here, through his actions, he also left his mark on the efficiency of the department's operations. He supported cooperation with European railway managements and international organizations, primarily with the International Union of Railways and Organization for Cooperation of Railways. He put much effort into ensuring this cooperation was at a suitable substantive level and corresponded to international standards.

In 1986, L. Skolasiński took over the position of head representative of PKP and PEKAS in Vienna, where he played a crucial role in organizing international carriages, mainly north-south with maximum exploitation of our ports. He also achieved a great deal in developing Polish-Austrian cooperation in the field of transportation; in this respect he was distinguished with the top-ranking award granted to foreigners by the President of Austria.

In 1991, he returned to the country and retired from railway work. However, he did not suspend his work. He did not hesitate when offered a job in Trade Trans, an international forwarder, which by the way was one of the initiators and organizers of this important link of the goods carriage system. He worked in Trade Trans until 1997.

In the last years of his professional activity, he dedicated himself to a large Swiss company – Ahaus Alstaetter Eisenbahn AG (AAE), which dealt with manufacturing and leasing rolling stock. His Austrian and Swiss experiences encouraged him to become interested in inter-modal transport which he was fascinated by and therefore shared information to those interested in the field of transport for the remainder of his life.

The list of L. Skolasiński's other achievements is very long but the aforesaid items prove we have paid tribute to a unique and eminent man who substantially contributed to the improvement of transport in general, and railway transport in particular, as well as advances in the administration managing this significant field of the economy.

*May he rest in peace
Adam Wielądek*