



UNIWERSYTET
O P O L S K I

The establishment of Opolski University in 1994 was the result of efforts and intellectual achievements of several generations of Opolski Silesia's inhabitants, who desired to have the highest-rank scholarly and educational institution in the European civilisation, the university.

Opolski University invokes the tradition related to the attempts to create a Piast university by Duke George II of Brieg in Brzeg in the 16th century and by Prince Charles Habsburg in Nysa in the 17th century. It also looks back to the tradition of the 19th-century Landwirtschaftliche Akademie Proskau (Agricultural Academy of Prószków, 1847-1881) in the vicinity of Opole.

It was, however, the combination of two local institutions of higher learning that led to the creation of Opolski University, namely, Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna im. Powstańców Śląskich (Higher School of Pedagogy named after Silesian Insurgents) with its 44-year history (1950-1994), one of the best Polish teachers' colleges, and the local branch of Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski (Catholic University of Lublin) which had existed here since 1981 and was based on the several decades of experience of Wyższe Seminarium Duchowne (Higher Seminary) in Nysa with its academic staff made up of the members of the former Faculty of Theology at Uniwersytet Jana Kazimierza (John Casimir University in Lvov).

The half century of academic Opole, whose emanation is Opolski University, was the common effort of outstanding intellectuals who arrived in Silesia from distant lands after WW2, chiefly from the lost eastern borderlands of pre-war Poland. They included eminent professors who were also in Opole Rectors and Deans, such as Stanisław Rospond (the first Rector of Higher School of Pedagogy) and Henryk Borek, outstanding linguists; Stanisław Kolbuszewski (the professor of University of Riga, Latvia, before WW2), eminent historian of literature; Jerzy Słupecki, a well-known logician, born in Charbin, China; Maurycy Horn, an illustrious medieval historian from Lvov; Władysław Dziewulski, an outstanding historian born in Moscow; Józef Kokot, a lawyer and political scientist, a long-time director of Silesian Institute in Opole; Barbara Rzeszotarska, an eminent chemist; Marian Adamus, an outstanding scholar in German and English studies; Eugeniusz Konik from Lvov, a historian of antiquity; Stanisław Kochman, a well-known scholar in Slavic studies; Dorota Simonides, an outstanding folklorist and long-time senator of the Republic of Poland; Tadeusz Gospodarek from Lvov, a sociologist; Maria Nowakowska, long-time



UNIWERSYTET
O P O L S K I

director of the Department of Chemistry; Stanisław Sławomir Nicieja, historian and biographer, a senator of the Republic of Poland, the author of monumental works about Lvov.

The local branch of Catholic University of Lublin, before it was incorporated in the structure of Opolski University, was shaped by outstanding professor-theologians: Alfons Nossol, philosopher, ecumenical scholar, holder of honorary doctorates from eight European universities; Helmut Sobeczko, an eminent liturgist; Kazimierz Dola, an outstanding ecclesiastical historian.

As a community of students, scholars and administration staff members of about 20 thousand, Opolski University used to have and still has a large group of eminent scholars and professors such as Dorota Simonides, Zdzisław Najder, Jan Barcz, Stanisław Gajda, Wiesław Łukaszewski, Wiesław Lesiuk, Stanisław Sławomir Nicieja, Barbara Rzeszotarska, Maria Nowakowska, Krystyna Czaja, Piotr Wieczorek, Józef Musielok, Andrzej Gawdzik, Franciszek Marek, Jan Seredyka, Marian Marek Drozdowski, Leszek Kuberski, Janusz Kroszel, Janusz Słodczyk, Rev. Alfons Nossol, Rev. Kazimierz Dola, Rev. Jan Kopiec, and outstanding artists, like Olga Tokarczuk, Tomasz Różycki, Jacek Gutorow, Marian Molenda.

In its twenty-year history, Opolski University awarded honorary doctorates to eminent scholars and intellectuals, among others, Pope John Paul II, Władysław Bartoszewski, Michał Głowiński, Adam Hanuszkiewicz, Jerzy Janicki, Ryszard Kaczorowski (Polish president), Wojciech Kilar, Kazimierz Kutz, Stanisław Lem, Wiesław Myśliwski, Archbishop Alfons Nossol, Jan Miodek, Hans-Gert Pöttering, Tadeusz Różewicz, Dorota Simonides, Janusz Tazbir, Lech Wałęsa (Polish president), Wojciech Wrzesiński.

Opolski University is given the main credit for creating the municipal Acropolis in the city centre - a gallery of renovated highly artistic baroque and neogothic sculptures and modern monuments dedicated to the renowned artists whose biographies were somehow linked to Opole.

Opolski University has been the venue for delivering lectures by eminent Polish and European scholars, artists and intellectuals, among others, Leszek Balcerowicz, Bronisław Geremek, Aleksander Gieysztor, Ryszard Kapuściński, Cardinals Walter Kasper and Josef Ratzinger, Jaroslav Pánek, Henryk Samsonowicz, Rev. Józef Tischner. The walls of Opolski University also welcomed the Polish Prime Ministers, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Józef Oleksy, Jarosław Kaczyński, Donald Tusk, and Polish Presidents, Lech Wałęsa and Ryszard Kaczorowski.



UNIWERSYTET
O P O L S K I

So far, about 100 thousand graduates have left Opolski University and its predecessor, including eminent Polish scholars, intellectuals, writers, poets, journalists, reporters, politicians in the ministerial rank, parliamentary deputies, senators, provincial governors as well as thousands of directors of kindergartens, elementary schools, junior and senior high schools. This is the most emphatic evidence of its reputation and social importance.

***Prof. dr hab. Stanisław Sławomir Nicieja, rektor University of Opole in 1996-2002, 2005-2008
and 2012 until now***