

*Discurso de investidura como Doctor "Honoris Causa" del
Excmo. Sr. D. Marek W. Radomski*

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EXCELENTÍSIMO Y MAGNÍFICO SR. RECTOR
EXCELENTÍSIMAS E ILUSTRÍSIMAS AUTORIDADES ACADEMICAS
PROFESORES, ALUMNOS, SEÑORAS Y SEÑORES

Es para mi un gran honor y enorme placer recibir esta prestigiosa distinción por parte de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, una de las Universidades de mayor prestigio mundial.

Me gustaría expresar mi mas sincera gratitud al Departamento de Farmacología de la Facultad de Medicina, a mis padrinos, los Doctores Pedro Lorenzo e Ignacio Lizasoain y al Consejo de Gobierno y Claustro Universitario por proponer y aprobar esta honorable distinción.

Aunque este es un galardón en reconocimiento a meritos académicos y personales a titulo individual me gustaría compartirla con mis mentores, discípulos, colegas y amigos con los que he estado trabajando e interactuando hasta el día de hoy. Como el poeta (jacobeo) metafísico John Donne escribió:

"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;".

As I have been privileged to go through my scientific career with a large group of exceptionally talented people it is impossible to acknowledge all of them in this short address. Therefore, let me only mention a very few.....

The man who convinced me to take up research was Professor Ryszard Gryglewski in the Department of Pharmacology Jagiellonski University in Krakow, Poland. These were very difficult times for Polish academia when "iron curtain" prevented us from free, unrestricted interactions with the rest of world of science. The research resources were exceedingly scarce in the times when the cost of one automated pipette exceeded the yearly budget of pharmacology department. Still Ryszard Gryglewski's charisma and knowledge prompted me to become a pharmacologist. He taught me elementary pharmacology; and thanks to his recommendation I went to work at the Wellcome Research Laboratories in Beckenham, UK with Sir John Vane and Professor Salvador Moncada.

Between 1980 and 1994 Wellcome was an extraordinary place that provided scientific home for four Nobel Prize winners: John Vane, George Hitchings, Trudy Ellion and James Black and the gallery of outstanding pharmacologists. We enjoyed a very vibrant research environment and resources far exceeding

the most extravagant budgets of university groups. The elucidation of the mode of action of aspirin, the discovery of prostacyclin, and the development of beta blockers, H₂ receptor antagonists, modern antiviral drugs and immunosuppressives, as well as seminal work on the biology and pharmacology of nitric oxide are only few examples of contributions of Wellcome scientists to the world of therapeutics.

Working in the group, led first by John Vane and later by Salvador Moncada, was the feat on its own, as I had a rare privilege of interacting with the best of best in pharmacology that were invariably attracted to such an exciting place. I remember one of the early meetings of the Prostaglandin Research Group led by John in Wellcome. As this was my turn to present research proposal I spent weeks devouring everything available on the subject of prostaglandin-platelet interactions. After half an hour of (what I thought to be) an exciting presentation John looked at me and said in his booming voice: "all is very well Marek, but where is the main hypothesis..??". Well, I have been passing this golden rule on to all my own students ever since.....

Masters classes in pharmacology given by Salvador (who I am sure does not require special introduction in Complutense since he has also this award) were equally instructive given his insatiable appetite for new discoveries and most remarkable research drive.

These were the shaping years of my professional adulthood that I will always remember and cherish!!

Over the past many years I have developed great fondness for Spain and Spanish people. My wife Ania and I went for the first time 20 years ago to Spain to a scientific conference in La Coruna. We fell in love with Spain, its people and culture and we have made very best Friends in this place.

Amazingly, enough most of my independent career in science has been marked by the interactions with my Spanish colleagues and Friends. Professor Pedro Lorenzo has always been to me a glowing example of gentleman-academic and mentor to an excellent group of scientists. Professor Maria Angeles Moro and Dr. Eduardo Salas were my first and very best post-doctoral fellows in Beckenham and Edmonton travelling with me through the elusive world of free radicals, peroxynitrite and MMP-2. With Eduardo and Mr. Manel Martinez we tried (albeit without great success) to build in Barcelona a viable R&D structure in Spanish drug company, Lacer. Professor Maria Angeles Martinez came to Edmonton to spend her post-doc with me tracing iNOS-induced injury in human liver. With Professor Ignacio Lizasoain and Professor Juan Carlos Leza who joined me as Visiting Professors in Beckenham and Edmonton we shared passion for free radicals and stress that can be only relieved with a glass of good Rioja. With Professor Jose Rodrigo we went down to the ultrastructure world to steal a glance or two of platelet metalloproteinases. With Pepe I continue enjoying immensely the privilege of viewing his remarkable paintings of neurons and brain. With Dr. Francisco Guarner we marvelled when faced with the damage brought about by MMP-9 in inflammatory bowel disease.

From this group of great colleagues and friends came to my lab the new generation of Spanish students. I shared fascination of platelets involvement in carcinogenesis and the inflammatory bowel disease with Dr. David Alonso-Escolano and Dr. Carlos Medina as we worked together in Edmonton and Houston. I hosted Dr. Jesus Pradillo during his pre-doctoral term in Dublin and currently I have two outstanding PhD students, Maria Jose Santos and Jose Corbalan. In this way the seed once seeded by Maria Angeles Moro and Eduardo Salas has never stopped growing....

Of course my scientific career not only intertwined with Spanish Friends and Colleagues. As scientific pathways have taken me from Poland, via England, Canada, Spain, USA to Ireland I have worked and interacted with a great number of people. I remember with special fondness the NO donor drug development work with Dr. Daryl Rees in Beckenham and the discovery of nitric oxide synthase in platelets shared with the Oaklands and Ohio University Professor Tadeusz Malinski (who has been my close colleague, collaborator and friend for the past 15 years). Then came the exciting times of MMP discoveries shared with Professors Marek Duszyk, Greg Sawicki, Jim Russell, Sandy Davage, Irvin Mayers and Rick Schulz in Edmonton, as well as the times spent with a Nobel laureate, Professor Ferid Murad in Houston. As Canada has become for my family and me the second home country, Edmonton and the University of Alberta remind me of exciting work and the times of mentoring excellent PhD students and post-docs led primarily by Dr. Paul Jurasz, followed closely by Dr. Lance McNaughton and Dr. Ada Chung.

Very recently, we have moved to the Trinity College Dublin and started fascinating work exploring the tiny realms of nano world. In the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Trinity College Dublin that I now lead I have found terrific place to enjoy research, life and make new Friends in a very friendly Ireland. Our lab is a busy collaborative place for my new PhD students and post-docs such as, Aneta Radziwon, Joanna McCarthy, Alan Gaffney, Iwona Inkielewicz, Sybille Endter and Trinity College colleagues led by Lidia Tajber, Owen Corrigan, Carsten Ehrhardt, Yuri Volkov, Kenneth Dawson and John Gilmer. In Dublin, I have old trusted Spanish Colleagues and Friends with me as Maria Jose Santos and Carlos Medina (who has just launched his own independent career at Trinity) remain and provide both the stability and impact to our group. I am also very grateful to the Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences, Professor Colm O'Morain for all his support and coming today from Dublin to Madrid to share our celebration.

There is a saying that science has no own country, but scientists do. For me Poland will always remain the closest place to my heart. Professor Krystyna Cedro-Ceremuzynska, Professor Leszek Ceremuzynski, Professor Wojciech Uracz and late Professor Miroslaw Mossakowski are always remembered as great colleagues and friends. I helped to set up basic research effort at the Silesian Centre of Heart Diseases in Zabrze working with Professor Marian Zembala, Dr Adam Sokal and the team. I hope that the fruit of this effort will be borne and stay for longer.

Last but not least, I have been blessed with great Family. My wife and life-long partner, Dr Ania Radomska, a gifted clinician and histopathologist, meticulous fellow scientist, lab mentor to a number of my students, co-author of many papers, loving Mum to our daughters Ola and Basia and doting Grand Mum to our most lovable grand-daughter, Bella, has been my beacon and rock for the past great many years. Although neither our elderly Polish folks (our Parents) nor our young Canadian children and grand children (Billy, Basia and Bella) can be with us today I am very happy to share this very moment with Ania, our older daughter, Ola, and with **all of you**.

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GRACIAS!