



Tadeusz J. Poprawski
October 25, 1947-January 7, 2001

Tadeusz J. ('Tad') Poprawski, 53, passed away at his home in Weslaco, Texas, on 7 January 2001 after a brief battle with lung cancer. Tad was widely known and respected as one of the most versatile and broadly trained insect pathologists of his generation. He is survived by his wife, Natalia, and daughter, Kalinka, who lives in Montreal, Canada, as well as by his mother, brother, and sister, all of Belgium (where Tad was born on 25 October 1947). Tad earned both his B.Sc. Agric. (with Honors) and his Ph.D. (Dean's Honor List) at McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

Tad was never one with much tolerance for this sort of dry recitation of biographic facts, and it can truly be said that he never talked much about his own history. We were not alone in believing, for example, that Tad had been born in Poland and were surprised to discover that he was, in fact, born in Belgium. Indeed, those who had the privilege to know Tad as more than a passing acquaintance knew well that he was a man of many surprises, with a boundless zest for work and life.

Tad had an unusual breadth and level of expertise in the fungi, viruses, bacteria, protozoans, and nematodes affecting insects as well as of insect parasitoids and predators. In addition to being an exceptional organismal biologist, Tad was also thoroughly well versed in the theory and practice of bioassays and experimental design, and in the principles and practices of biological and microbial control and integrated pest management. The level of this expertise was reflected in the appointments he repeatedly received to highly responsible assignments that led him to nearly every corner of the world. His remarkable scientific versatility and ability to speak many European and Slavic languages made him a distinguished representative of the Agricultural Research Service in his many long- and short-term assignments around the world. Tad's doctoral research focused on the microbial control of scarabaeid pests of turf. At the ARS European Parasite Laboratory during 1983-84, he was responsible for the collection of more than 250 isolates of pathogens affecting key pests of agriculture, as well as for the culturing, processing, and shipment of these organisms to international collaborators. The entomophthorean fungal pathogens of grasshoppers were the main focus of thirteen months as a Research Associate at the Boyce Thompson Institute where Tad worked in the ARS Insect Pathology Research Unit.

Tad's European background and broad abilities were again called on from 1985-1990 when he returned to the ARS European facilities (now moved to Behoust and renamed the European

Biocontrol Laboratory) to oversee the program to discover, collect, ship, and conduct research on microbial entomopathogens. This position at the European Biological Control Laboratory was one from which he was assigned to explore for insect natural enemies and potential biocontrol agents throughout Europe, Africa, and Asia. From 1990-93, Tad was again brought back to the ARS Plant Protection Research Unit in Ithaca, NY, to lead the laboratory and field research programs on fungal biocontrol of Russian wheat aphid and sweet potato whitefly.

In 1993 Tad moved yet again from Ithaca to the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. There, as an employee of Texas A&M University, he collaborated with scientists of the ARS Beneficial Insects Research Unit of the Subtropical Agricultural Research Center and continued his research on insect pathology and microbial control of sweet potato whitefly, Colorado potato beetle, Japanese beetle, onion thrips, brown citrus aphid, and other pests. Tad authored more than 130 research papers and reports and more than 30 abstracts for presentations at various scientific meetings.

Apart from his research duties, Tad was highly esteemed as a mentor and advisor who lavished his time and attention on students and collaborators from many parts of the world to provide them training in the techniques and concepts of many field and laboratory facets of insect pathology and biological control. His efforts in this area made substantial contributions to nurture and to refine the knowledge and capabilities of many insect pathologists and their laboratories in South Africa, Kenya, Mexico, India, Poland, Czech Republic, France, Russia and other parts of the former Soviet Union, as well as in Canada.

Tad was an enthusiastic supporter of the Society for Invertebrate Pathology. He was particularly active in the Microbial Control Division, and served as the Chair of the Endowment and Student Awards Committee. Through his extensive international connections, he identified many of the scientists and students honored with the Society's endowed memberships during the last several years. In one of the types of quotes that can be found on calendars and other sources for such disembodied sayings, Robert Kirby is credited with observing that "The mark of a true professional is giving more than you get." Tad always gave freely of himself at work and leisure. Tad did not complain much about what life dealt him, even during this final illness. We have no doubt that Tad considered himself to be truly wealthy in the love and respect of his family, friends and colleagues, and that he was buffered against the bad times by an irrepressible *joie de vivre* that will always be a model of how to live well. An internationalist by birth, breeding, and inclination, Tad and his wife, Natalia, were enthusiastic travelers who loved to immerse themselves in the local life, cuisine, and culture wherever they found themselves. It was always a joy to experience Tad in action at work or leisure, especially in an ethnically or culturally mixed group, where he could switch from one language to another (and yet another) with seamless facility and elevate the comfort level for all in an instant. His smile was infectious, his laughter hearty and frequent, his hospitality warm and genuine. His friends were many, and he will be much missed and never forgotten by us all.

Richard A. Humber
Stephen P. Wraight
Connie Veland