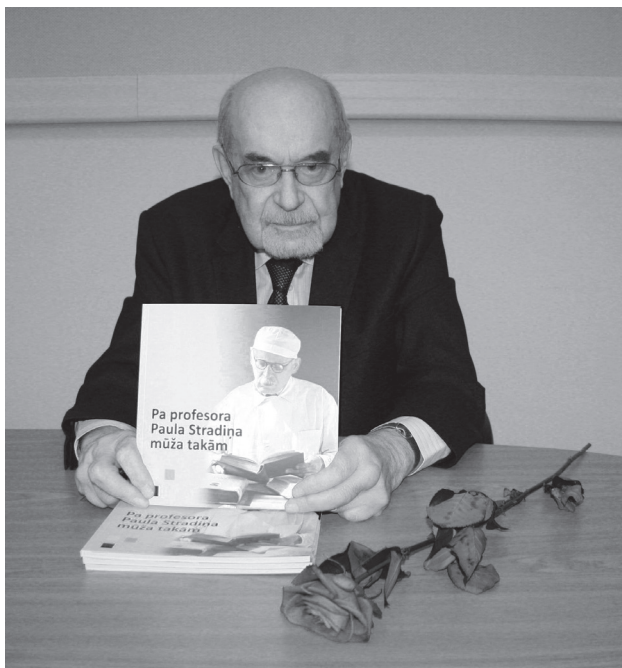


## In Memoriam: Arnis Vīksna (1942–2018)



Arnis Vīksna, 17 January 2018.

Photo by M. Pozemkovska.

Professor *Dr. med. h. c.* Arnis Vīksna, the outstanding medical historian, a long-term employee of the Pauls Stradiņš Museum for History of Medicine and member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, passed away on 25 April 2018.

Arnis Vīksna was born on 25 February 1942 in the city of Lubāna. In 1966, he graduated from the Riga Medical Institute and in 1971 defended his doctoral thesis. In 1994, the Latvian Medical Academy (now Rīga Stradiņš University) awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor Honoris Causa. Arnis Vīksna was elected a full member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences in 2001. Vīksna has devoted almost thirty years of his life (from 1969 to 1998) to the Pauls Stradiņš Museum for History of Medicine. In 1998, he became a professor at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Latvia and in 2011 also Head of the Department

of Medical Pedagogy, Ethics and History. Notwithstanding his place of work or academic activity, he never cut ties with the Pauls Stradiņš Museum for History of Medicine and in 2015 he rejoined the team at the Pauls Stradiņš Museum for History of Medicine and worked here till the end of his life.

Arnīs Viksna was the restorer of the Latvian Medical Association and its long-term board member; he was also a member of the Latvian Association of Medical Historians, its long-term secretary and in 1993–1997 served as president of the association. Since 1996, Professor Viksna was the acting vice-president of the Latvian Association of the Historians of Sciences and for many years he chaired the History of Sciences and Museum Sciences session at the Scientific Conference of the University of Latvia. Throughout the years from 1969 to 2017, Viksna prepared reports for all Baltic Conferences on the History of Science. Due to health problems he did not attend the 24th Conference in Tallinn in 2010; nevertheless, the joint report was presented by his colleague Maija Pozemkovska. The academician did not personally participate in the 26th Conference in Helsinki (2014) and in the 28th Conference in Tartu (2017) either; however, his reports were presented at both conferences—the last one was dedicated to the first Rector of the University of Dorpat (today's Tartu) Georg Friedrich Parrot and his Latvian students. Arnīs Viksna was the honorary member of several international and foreign associations of medical historians.

His main research interest was the history of medicine of Latvia and particularly medical education in Latvia and Tartu. He has made a valuable contribution to studying the lives of outstanding medical personalities, medical monuments, historical pharmacies, the history of hospitals, medicine in Latgale, activities of the Latvian Red Cross and medical insurance. A source of information of particular value was the facts and figures on medical anniversaries that were collected and organised by Viksna over several decades and were published under his editorship annually. This information honoured the history not only of renowned medical professionals and scientists but also listed common medical practitioners who had devoted their lives to medicine.

Having gone through piles of archived data and being personally acquainted with numerous medical practitioners of the 20th century, Arnīs Viksna was the most experienced and competent expert in contemporary medical history of Latvia and was frequently consulted as an expert in the field. Viksna is the author of over thirty books and numerous scientific and medical history articles and he has been the editor and served as a member of the editorial board for many publications in medicine. His latest book *Pa profesora Paula Stradiņa mūža takām*

was published this year, on 17 January—Pauls Stradiņš' birthday. Unfortunately, Viksna did not experience the launch of his final publication, a revised and supplemented version of his book, initially published in 1983—*Dodot gaismu sadegu*.

Arnis Viksna was among the editors of the RTU scientific journal *Humanities and Social Sciences* sub-series *History of Sciences and Universities* (2002–2016) and in 2017 he agreed to be part of the editorial board of the publication by the RTU Research Centre for Engineering History 'History of Engineering and Universities', where he rigorously edited articles, pointed out shortcomings and gave authors valuable advice.

He was a multi-faceted specialist, well-versed not only in medicine but also in medical history. He loved good music and literature, went fishing in his spare time and enjoyed time with his son and granddaughters.

His contribution to medical history has been recognised with a number of awards: The Order of Three Stars (2007), Pauls Stradiņš Award (1987), D. H. Grindel Medal (1995), Latvian Red Cross Award (2008) and the award of the Latvian Medical Association "Tempus homini" (2009).

Being a legend of medical history during his lifetime, Arnis Viksna has joined the community of outstanding medical professionals in heaven, being now given the opportunity to directly address departed colleagues with questions that had remained unanswered!

### **Artis Ērglis**

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