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## IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR EDWARD SUCHARDA: APROPOS OF THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF BIRTH

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This year we have celebrated the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Edward Sucharda's [su'hArdA] birth. Edward Sucharda was an eminent Polish chemist and engineer, a professor of Lviv Polytechnic, its vice-Rector (1933—1935) and Rector (1938—1939), a member of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, the President of the Polish Chemical Society (1947), and a combatant as well. He was born on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of June 1891 in Brzeżany (now Berezhany, Ternopil region, Ukraine). His father, also Edward Sucharda, was a notary and his mother, Helen Ziembicka (maiden name), was a teacher.

Young E. Sucharda first went to school in Jaroslaw, and later continued his education in Lviv, where he finished the 2<sup>nd</sup> Real School with honours. He graduated from the Lviv Polytechnic School (later on Lviv Polytechnic) in 1912 with a degree in chemical engineering and seemed to have been taking a genteel path to a scientific career. In 1914 the ambitious E. Sucharda earned his doctorate for the thesis titled: "Acids of 8-oxyquinoline and their derivatives. Dioxyantraquinon-3,7-diquinolin." During World War I, being Prof. Stephen Niementowsky's (August 4<sup>th</sup> 1866—July 13<sup>th</sup> 1925) assistant, he was two times conscripted for active military service into the Austrian Army. Towards the end of his active duty he served as a technical officer at an explosive plant on the outskirts of Vienna.

In November 1918 E. Sucharda returned to Lviv, enlisted in the Polish Army and participated in the Battle of Lwów (1918) on the side of Poles. During the Polish-Ukrainian War of 1918–1919 he supervised a munitions factory. After the military actions ended, he dwelt in Warsaw for several months, working at the Ministry of War.

In 1920 E. Sucharda, barely 29 years of age, habilitated: ("5,6,8-trioxybenzonaphthyridine and its oxidation to 1,8-naphthyridine derivatives") and took charge of the Department of General Chemistry at the Agricultural and Forestry division of Lviv Polytechnic. In 1921 he was appointed an associate professor, two years later – a professor. After Prof. S. Niementowsky's death (1925) the Department of General and Analytical Chemistry, which had been led by the deceased, partitioned and Prof. E. Sucharda headed the detached Department of Organic Chemistry and chaired it until 1945.

When working at Lviv Polytechnic, the prolific E. Sucharda was recognized as the outstanding organizer and trod on the full way of his scientific career. He was repeatedly elected a member of Senate (the governing council). In 1938 Prof. E. Sucharda became Rector of Lviv Polytechnic. On May 10<sup>th</sup> 1939, Prof. E. Sucharda was unanimously elected Rector for the next term, but he resigned from the post.

In the days of World War II, during the first Soviet occupation, E. Sucharda headed the Department of Organic Chemistry at the Soviet Lviv Polytechnic Institute. In the period of the Nazi occupation he initiated the foundation of *Technische Fachkurse*, as the German authorities permitted the teaching of students. The students received German identification cards (*Ausweis*), which helped them to avoid deportation to Germany as forced labour.

Meanwhile, he was a member of the Government Delegation for Poland (an Agency of the Polish Government in Exile during the Second World War). The lion-hearted E. Sucharda put in jeopardy his life, as in cooperation with the AK (the Home Army, the dominant Polish resistance movement in the World War II German-occupied Poland) he manufactured explosives. In addition, he packaged potassium cyanide in ampoules, which were meant for prisoners and the AK members were engaged in extremely risky operations.