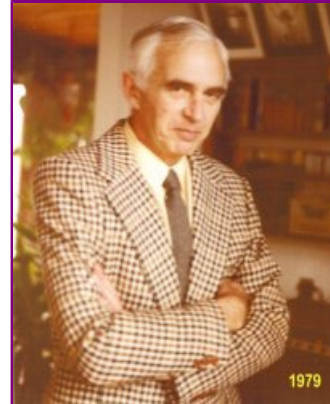


## ALEXANDER ADAM LEMPICKI. PhD

### Polish patriot, renowned physicist - in Memoriam

**Alexander Lempicki (Alik to his close friends) died after a long illness, in Brookline, Massachusetts, on December 23, 2007.** He was the proprietor of a research laboratory, ALEM Associates. Previously he had been Research Professor at Boston University.

This remarkable Polish patriot, extremely talented man of science, and a warm friend and art connoisseur, is mourned by his surviving colleagues and by his two daughters, Maria Vuoto, Veronica Mitchell and five grandsons.



He was born 26 Jan 1922 in Warsaw, Poland.

His father: Dominik was a businessman in Warsaw, owner of a sugar mill, a Knight of the Order of Malta, order of Virtuti Militarii - killed in the Siege of Warsaw, 25 Sept 1939.

His mother: Janina Czaplicka, grand-daughter of a well known painter Piotr Michalowski, lived for a number of years in the USA..

His younger sister: Dorota was killed in the Warsaw Rising 2 Aug 1944, at age 18, serving as a medic in Battalion Zońska

From 1934 till 1939 Lempicki was a high school student in the renowned boarding school [Liceum Sułkowski](#) in Rydzyna, western Poland. It was here that he demonstrated his talent for physics, and under the mentorship of the physics teacher [Dr. Arkadiusz Piekara](#), carried out many advanced investigative projects, including studies of cosmic rays. Unfortunately the invasion of Poland by the Nazi armies forced a six year break in his studies. He completed his Matriculation examinations in [secret study groups](#) in Warsaw in 1941 (the occupiers had closed all secondary schools).



At military training camp - June 1939

During the German occupation he was a very active member of the Polish Underground movement. Initially he was a courier distributing newsheets around Warsaw with the latest news obtained from BBC broadcasts.

Then he moved to his cousin's rural estate in central Poland close to Kielce. There he studied physics textbooks, but soon he joined an [AK \("Armia Krajowa"\)](#) group operating in the Holy Cross Mountains (Góry Świętokrzyskie) This group was under the command of Major Jan Piwnik "Ponury" and Lt. Eugeniusz Kaszynski "Nurt", who both had been parachuted in from the Polish forces in Scotland. This group carried out attacks on German army trains, operated a factory that was

manufacturing automatic weapons, and carried out raids on prisons freeing many captives. Lempicki worked for a while as a courier between the main command and the smaller groups. An underground court passed sentences on traitors and the most vicious Nazi criminals. Lempicki lead the group that tracked down and carried out the execution of the SS-man responsible for the massacre of 19 men, women and children at a wedding party in the manor house at Zbydniów.

During his activities in the Underground he used the code names "Howerla" and later "Łukomski".

In January 1945 the Soviet army advanced through central Poland. Although named by some as "liberators", they were accompanied by the NKWD, and its Polish branch [UB \(Urząd Bezpieczeństwa\)](#), which continued the Nazi terror tactics of arresting, and frequently executing, families of the landed gentry and members of the Polish Underground that had been fighting the Nazis for so many years. Alexander was arrested in March 1945 and incarcerated in the prison in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski. Fortunately he and a number of other prisoners were used in work parties to repair the railroad. He took advantage of being marched through a farmers market to make his escape. He reached the apartment of Dr. Piekara in Kraków, where he hid while preparing documentation to escape Poland. He made his way through Czechoslovakia to reach the American Third Army in Pilsno. From there he reached the [Polish Second Corps](#) of General Anders in Italy, in July 1945.

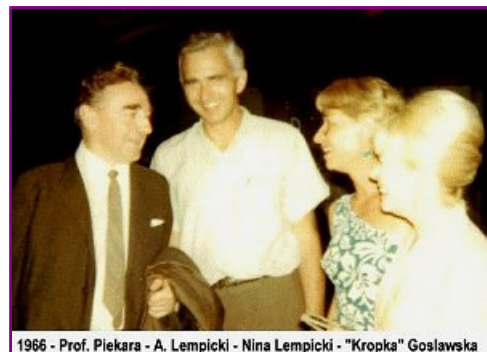
He used his knowledge of the escape route to organise the bringing of families of officers from Poland to Italy. In fact, he personally returned to Poland to escort the wife of one senior officer to Ancona. He then enrolled in the university in Rome to study physics. However in 1946 the Second Corps was moved from Italy to Great Britain for demobilisation.

At this time he did not speak any English but he established a routine of learning 25 new words and phrases every day, selected at random from the newspaper. He learned enough to enroll in the Imperial College of Science and Technology in London.

He obtained his B.Sc. in 1949, and M.Sc in 1952. At the same time he had been working in the research laboratory of EMI (among other things they were developing color TV cameras at that time). However he had set his sights on America. As a result of a paper he had written, he was offered a position in the research laboratory of Sylvania Electric, Bayside, Long Island, NY. He was refused a visa by the U.S. embassy on the basis that he was communist!!! Quickly he obtained supporting letters from Gen. Anders and other prominent Poles and within two months the decision was reversed by Washington. In 1955 he arrived in New York with his new wife Nina Weiss (also Polish) and quickly settled into his new job. He returned briefly to London in 1960 to obtain his degree Dr.Sc. from London University.

He was enchanted by the friendliness and openness of his colleagues and neighbors, the assistance that was so easily available to him in finding a place to live, in buying a used car, and establishing a new life. He noted how his colleagues were proud of the fact that their parents had been poor and had worked at menial jobs, this was markedly in contrast to the caste system prevalent in Europe and which he personally deplored, probably influenced by the philosophy taught at high school in Rydzyna.

At Sylvania (later acquired by GTE) he worked on numerous projects including electro- luminescence and lasers. He was co-inventor of the first Pulsed Liquid Laser. From 1964 to 1972 he was manager of the Quantum Physics Group and then manager of the ElectronOptics Group.



1966 - Prof. Piekara - A. Lempicki - Nina Lempicki - "Kropka" Gosławska

In 1983 he received an appointment as Research Professor at Boston University, where he continued research in the chemistry and physics laboratories on laser materials, optical properties of ceramics and light scattering in solids. In 1989 he established his own research company - ALEM Associates - to apply his knowledge to solving practical problems, and with the assistance of Prof. C. Brecher the development of new scintillator materials and optical ceramics, in particular for application in Positron Emission Tomography (PET Imaging). This work was supported by grants from NIH (National Institute of Health) and SBIR (Small Business Innovation Research ) grants from DOD. In January 2000 both of them resigned from Boston University to devote their full time to ALEM, which was relocated to Watertown, MA.

Dr. Lempicki has written or co-authored over 180 papers, and has obtained 20 patents. After the de-Stalinization of communist Poland. he resumed close contact with Dr. Arkadiusz Piekara until his death in 1989, and also with the University of Torun and has provided work assignments at ALEM for many students of that university, assisting them in obtaining their PhD degree..

Alexander Lempicki was not only a dedicated and extremely talented scientist. He also maintained a lively interest in cultural and outdoor life, he and Nina decorated their homes with art objects acquired all over the world, including several pictures and sculptures by his great-grandfather (on his mother's side) [Piotr Michałowski](#). For a number of years Alik maintained a dark room in which he worked on his own photographs. While still living on Long Island, he and Nina had bought acreage in the Berkshires where for many years they kept horses. They adopted two girls in the 1960s - Maria and Veronica. After moving to Boston University they built a lovely house in a western suburb of Boston. but when Nina's health started failing, they sold it and moved to a townhouse on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston. Nina died in 1999 after a long fight with Alzheimer's disease.

Alexander Lempicki was a Fellow of the American Physical Society and of the American Optical Society.

#### Sources:

- Wep pages <http://alemassociates.com>.
- Film "Alexander Lempicki" produced by Videofilm, Brooklyn, NY (T.Jagninski).
- Book "Gimnazjum i Liceum im. Sułkowskich - Wychowawcy i Wychowankowie" by J. Gliński. - page 173. Published by Fundacja im. Tadeusza Łopuszanskiego, Warsaw, 2005.

Text extracted from: <http://biega.com/lempicki.html> on Feb. 29, 2008

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#### RECOMMENDED LINKS for more information

- <http://alemassociates.com> - ALEM Associates Web site.
- <http://biega.com/muzeumAK/hak-e.html> - a brief history of the Polish Underground Army
- <http://custermen.com/ItalyWW2/ArmyOrg/PolishOrg.htm> - Polish II Corps, the Polish army in Italy in WW II
- <http://biega.com/book.html> - Occupied Warsaw and the Rising - excerpts from a book
- [http://www.forumakad.pl/archiwum/2002/02/artykuly/24-rody\\_uczone.htm](http://www.forumakad.pl/archiwum/2002/02/artykuly/24-rody_uczone.htm) - biography of Arkadiusz Piekara (in Polish)
- <http://www.wykus.zhr.pl/index.php?s=historia> - Nurt-Ponury group - AK fighting in central Poland (in Polish)