

This year, Professor Bożena Borkowska passed away. Professor Borkowska was a distinguished scholar and an active member of the academic community. The academic world is profoundly enriched by her work and dedication. To honor her memory, we invited her colleagues to share a few words commemorating this remarkable figure.

At the same time, the entire editorial team of *Ekonomia i Prawo. Economics and Law* extends our heartfelt condolences to Professor Borkowska's family and her co-workers from Wrocław University of Economics.

Editorial Team

Ekonomia i Prawo. Economics and Law

Dr hab. Sławomir Czetwertyński, prof. UEW

The academic community received with deep sadness the news of the passing of Associate Professor Bożena Borkowska, an unforgettable figure in Polish academia and a long-standing faculty member of the Wrocław University of Economics. Professor Borkowska was not only a respected researcher and lecturer but also an inspiration to many generations of students and colleagues. For years, she led the Department of Microeconomics and Institutional Economics at her alma mater, serving as its Head from 2012 until her passing.

Bożena Borkowska (née Fiećko) was born in Wrocław in 1955, where she graduated from the First General Secondary School. In 1979, she earned a degree in Economic Cybernetics and Informatics from the Wrocław University of Economics. Her academic journey began with research into the real economy under socialism, culminating in her doctoral dissertation in 1989, just prior to the systemic and economic transformation in Poland. In the 1990s, her scholarly focus shifted toward institutional economics, with a particular emphasis on state regulation, the protection of competitive mechanisms, and limiting opportunistic behaviours. Her most significant contribution to the field of economics was her monograph, *Regulation of Natural Monopoly in Theory and Practice*, published by the Wrocław University of Economics Press in 2009. This work served as the basis for her habilitation degree in 2010 and earned her the prestigious Edward Lipiński Award for her outstanding contributions to Polish economic science the following year. In 2011, she was appointed University Professor.



Professor Borkowska's invaluable contributions to the study of institutions in market regulation and contract protection, as well as her research on ethics and axiology in economics, were recognised not only within academic circles but also by governmental bodies. In 2014, she was appointed to the Advisory Board of the Office of Competition and Consumer Protection, where her dedication to bridging theory and practice was evident in her efforts to strengthen institutions safeguarding consumer rights and competition mechanisms.

Her career was marked by international engagement. She participated in the Trans-European Mobility Programme for University Studies, collaborating with universities in Münster and Odense, where she undertook research fellowships during 1996–1997. In 1997, she also conducted a research fellowship at the University of Dublin. These experiences deepened her expertise in market regulation, particularly in the area of natural monopolies, and led to further research as well as participation in a project commissioned by the State Committee for Scientific Research, focusing on the impact of economic and professional self-government on the formation of market order in Poland.

Within the academic community, she sought to integrate scholars specializing in institutional economics. She co-founded and co-organized the conference series *Institutions in Theory and Practice*, which brought together representatives from academic centers in Toruń (Nicolaus Copernicus University), Poznań (Poznań University of Economics), and Wrocław (Wrocław University of Economics). The most recent conference, held in Wrocław in 2024, highlighted Professor Borkowska's unwavering commitment to advancing academic values.

Professor Bożena Borkowska was also an exceptional educator. Her monograph on institutional economics, co-authored with Professor Bożena Klimczak and Dr. Mikołaj Klimczak and published by the Wrocław University of Economics Press in 2019, was awarded the First Prize from the Polish Economic Society for best academic textbook. She also co-authored publications on microeconomics and served as a long-time editor of student publications, helping to launch the academic careers of many of her protégés.

Unyielding and uncompromising in her pursuit of scientific truth, Professor Borkowska demanded clear and rigorous answers to the most challenging questions. She established standards and set directions in teaching, adhering to the highest principles of competence and fostering independence among her students.

A prolific author of numerous scholarly articles, a mentor to doctoral candidates, and a distinguished member of the academic community, Professor Borkowska left an indelible mark. Until the very end, she remained dedicated to the mission of advancing science and disseminating knowledge.

**Prof. dr hab. Marek Ratajczak**

My last meeting with Bożena – I will allow myself to use her first name due to the friendship we shared – took place at the end of June 2024, during another conference on institutional economics, regularly organized in collaboration between the Wrocław University of Economics and Business, the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, and the Poznań University of Economics and Business. Few participants, apart from those who were closely acquainted with Bożena, could have guessed the immense effort it took for her to attend and actively participate, providing comments and questions on the presented papers. During our farewell, Bożena expressed hope for a reunion at the conference planned for September in Poznań, which was to coincide with my jubilee. Sadly, we never saw each other again...

I first met Bożena at one of the earliest conferences in Poland dedicated to institutional economics, held at the Wrocław University of Economics and Business. At that time, she was still a doctor and co-organized the conference together with Professor Bożena Klimczak. Shortly thereafter, we met again during Bożena's habilitation proceedings, for which I was a reviewer. Her habilitation thesis, *Regulation of Natural Monopoly in Theory and Practice*, was a testament to her excellent academic skills and exceptional research diligence, grounded in thorough studies of the theoretical foundations of her analysis. This diligence and remarkable research integrity were also evident when I encountered Bożena – by then a habilitated doctor – several times as a reviewer in proceedings related to awarding academic degrees. Her reviews were often several pages long, effectively independent scholarly analyses, in which she meticulously documented her perspective.

In her evaluations, she was never influenced by personal considerations. Whether the individual whose work she assessed was a budding researcher at the start of their career or someone who had already achieved the status of an “authority” was irrelevant to her.

The bond that I dare to describe as friendship was forged through the successive conferences mentioned earlier, as well as other academic events we both attended. The papers and other contributions presented by Bożena were evidence of her outstanding academic rigor. She was also a demanding discusssant, quickly identifying issues that required clarification or further exploration.

Regrettably, all of this is now only part of the memories of a person who, through her attitude, bore witness to the importance of and reliance on traditional academic values, such as the pursuit of truth, respect for others, and the strict separation of personal matters from the substance of scientific disputes.

**Dr hab. Jerzy Boehlke, prof. UMK**

I met Professor Bożena Borkowska in 1996 during workshops on competition policy and economic regulation organized by the European Commission in Dublin. Even then, she stood out for her active participation and extensive knowledge during discussions involving European and American experts. Our stay in Dublin marked the beginning of closer collaboration between our academic communities in Poland. This was facilitated by the growing interest in institutional economics and issues of economic development among researchers at the Wrocław University of Economics and Business and the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń.

An important outcome of this rapidly developing cooperation between our communities was the decision to jointly organize a series of academic conferences under the title *Institutions in Theory and Practice*. The Poznań University of Economics and Business soon became an active participant in this initiative. Experience has shown that this was a worthwhile and engaging idea, and successive editions of these joint conferences have been alternately hosted by the universities in Wrocław, Poznań, and Toruń for nine years now.

Professor Bożena Borkowska's role in preparing and implementing this initiative was pivotal and cannot be overstated. Fate had it that our last meeting took place in June 2024 in Wrocław, during another edition of the *Institutions in Theory and Practice* conference, which was still organized under her leadership. Despite the progression of a very severe illness, she displayed her characteristic activity and competence in the academic discussions and debates at the conference. Her sense of humor did not abandon her either. I did not expect at the time that the formal dinner organized for the conference participants would be our last meal together. We had already made plans to meet again at the next edition of the conference in 2025 in Toruń.

Professor Bożena Borkowska was a very diligent and committed researcher in the field of oligopolistic competition and economic regulation. Her achievements in this area are well-known, appreciated, and respected. Her attitude, character traits, and the high standards she set for herself and others ensured that the academic works she prepared, as well as the doctoral dissertations supervised by her, were of high quality and academic rigor—something I witnessed firsthand as their reviewer.

For me personally, Professor Bożena Borkowska was not only an outstanding academic but also a close and kind colleague, thanks to whom I came to know her friends and collaborators from the Department of Microeconomics and Institutional Economics at the Wrocław University of Economics and Business. I am deeply convinced that they will continue to uphold the relationships we have built. I believe this is something that Professor Bożena Borkowska herself would have wanted.