

The first School of Nursing at the Medical Academy in Białystok – in memory of Franciszka Bakun

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ABSTRACT

Nursing education began at the Medical University of Białystok in 1956, when the Medical Academy in Białystok began its Public School of Nursing. It was organized by the Health Division and Social Care of the Provincial Council in Białystok in agreement with the Academy's authorities. The aim of the school was the education of a specialist staff of nurses and instructors for the new developing departments of the Medical School.

The school conducted its activities until 1959. In 1999, it began a nursing education program at the Medical Academy in Białystok and the Department of Nursing was created at the Medical Faculty. At present, these educational programs are serving the licensing studies of nurses and midwives and the studies for the master's degree in nursing.

Key words: academic education, nurses, Medical Academy in Białystok

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INTRODUCTION

*Education is what most receive, many pass on,
and few possess.*

Karl Kraus (1874 – 1936) [1]

Nursing is the oldest manifestation of human activity. For a long time, people have taken care of other people with love, affection, and mercy, without having had any training. Nursing has been called the oldest of arts and the youngest of professions. The development of nursing as a profession depended on three additional ingredients: skill, expertise, and knowledge [1].

The concept of training nurses arrived in Poland in the first half of the nineteenth century, when the first professional school of nursing was founded in 1911 in Krakow [2]. This school was managed by a group of Polish women gathered at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, with help from professors of medicine and the Sisters of Mercy. Two who played a main role in its creation were Maria Epstein and Anna Rydlówna [2].

After the Second World War, nursing education in Poland encountered many difficult problems that had to be solved [2]. There were no schools, teachers, or relevant curricula, and there was a scarcity of educated nurses and a lack of appropriate prestige for the nursing profession [2].

Distinct steps were undertaken in order to resolve the problems related to the training of nurses until 1955, as a result of complaints about the low level of the professional training of nurses by the Professional Association of Health Care Workers. At that time, there were 18 different ways to acquire training in the nursing profession. Beginning in 1955, a precondition for admission to a two-year nursing school was the satisfactory completion of high school [2].

The beginnings of nursing education at the Medical Academy in Białystok

Education should consist of living life, not a dead science

Mikolaj Gogol [1]

The beginnings of nursing education at the Medical Academy in Białystok date from 1956. The Medical School of Białystok launched the National School of Nursing, organized by the Department of Health and Human Services Bureau of the Provincial Council in Białystok [3]. The establishment of professional nursing education was important for the university and for the further development of health services in the province of Białystok. The aim of the school was to prepare a highly specialized team of nurses and instructors for emerging clinics [3-5].

During this period, there was only one candidate in the Białystok School of Nursing receiving the nine classes. The National School of Nursing at the Medical Academy in Białystok was open only to graduates of secondary schools who possessed a secondary school certificate. The first nursing education program began with 35 students. The Medical Academy provided classrooms, workshops, and laboratories and allowed candidates to gain practical work experience in hospitals and clinics. The Medical Academy provided the school's management and academic staff, who conducted lectures according to the programs of this type of school.

In her speech to students at the inauguration of the first year, the director of the school, Franciszka Bakun, said, *"It is an event of major importance, for you and for the further development of the Health Service primarily in or city. Since then, the extent to which you have mastered the theory and practice will prepare you to perform the noble profession of nursing care for your job, the good name of our school, and for the good of society. You must have a firm resolve to use every day to acquire the full knowledge and best practice in professional preparation."*



The first students of the first year of the Medical Academy in Białystok

Source: Photo courtesy of Ewa Tabor



The first students of the first year of the Medical Academy in Białystok

Source: Photo courtesy of Ewa Tabor

Since the beginning of learning, Franciszka Bakun once said, "It is not easy to earn nursing uniforms, and even harder to know how to wear it proudly and will keep forever" [4,5]. She argued "a teaching hospital is a hospital that provides clinical education and training for nurses. Patient is not a neutral object model to perform or exercise. A suffering human hopes to help. Patient's recovery depends to a large extent on nursing care" [4, 5]. She believed that school staff and society "wants to see working nurses in a healthcare system" [4, 5]. One student, Ewa Brażuk-Tabor [6], described her motivation to study at the School of Nursing in Białystok, as follows: 1.To increase prestige of the nursing profession to society (only the Nursing School accepted candidates after nine classes). 2. Better employment, a higher position than serial nurses such as becoming an instructor in the school, a ward, or matron. During the two years of study, in addition to theory, they worked as a nurse in various hospital departments [3,4].



Archive article in Gazeta Białostocka "Girls in White" Source: Photo courtesy of Professor Franciszka Bakun

Students gained not only professional experience, but they also conducted scientific activities [6]. For instance, student Ewa Brażak was conducting research at the National School of Nursing and achieved a greater respect for the nursing profession to the society. Some students were unable to study at the Faculty of Medicine of the Medical Academy in Białystok for various reasons.

One of them, Teresa Noworadke, after the start of school, said, "I think I would be a bad doctor if I did not know nursing" [4]. The first nurses completed their studies in 1958 [3-5]. They received a graduate diploma and medallion-brooch with the initials of each graduate.



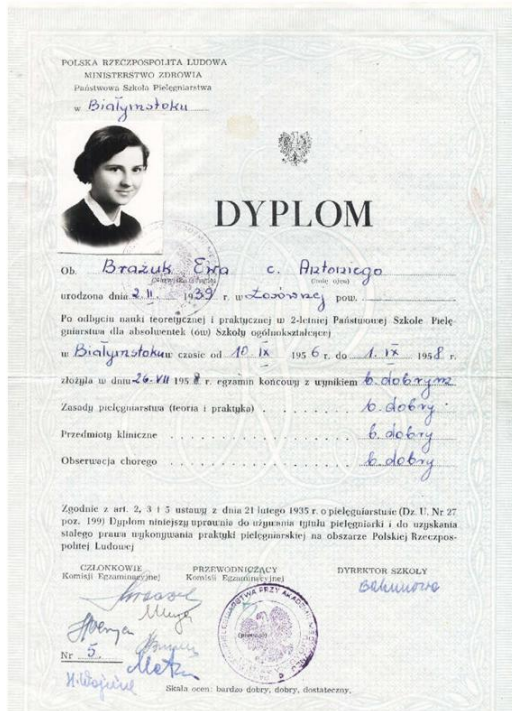
Commemorative brooch - a medallion graduate school of nursing, source: own photo

The medallion was a symbolic expression of the work of nurses. A candle engraved on the medallion symbolized the never fading strength of spirit, providing warmth and brightening darkness. There was never a sign of a dying faith in the necessity and meaning of service to patients and their homeland.

In her speech, headmaster appealed "You always should keep in your mind term nursing by Florence Nightingale. Nursing is the most beautiful of the arts... As the art of beauty your work should be creative in any field and in any place, at the bedside or in the society..." She continues, "You have an extensive professional knowledge and skills, but if you do not have a creative element, if the whole field of spiritual silence, then nursing is reduced to craft and is no longer nursing care throughout the meaning of the word [5].

Based on the resolution, the Faculty Council decided that the best students will be able to study in the Medical Academy in Białystok [2,3]. The first student who had been selected to study at the Medical Academy in Białystok was Stefania Dabrowska [2,3].

The school conducted its activities until July 1959. In a recent speech addressed to the graduates of the second and final course at the School of Nursing, Medical University of Białystok, Bakun said:

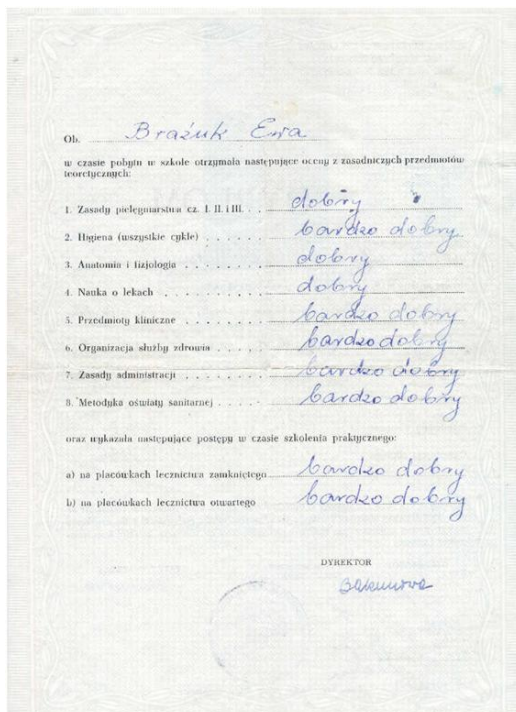


should be constantly maintained at a high level of professional work. This level depends largely on you [4,5]. I would like to once again remind you that the nursing profession is not a learned craft. Nursing is one of the most beautiful events that can occur. It is contact with those who trust you and expect your help. I hope you have developed these wonderful character traits during your education at our school. [4, 5]. I would like to once again remind that the nursing profession is not learned crafts. Nursing is one of the most beautiful event. Contact with man who trusts you and expect your help.

First director

To be human is to sit on the crystal morality, unlimited tolerance, passion for reaching the hard-working, strive for continuous replenishment of his education, to help others Janusz Korczak [7]

The first director of the Nursing School of the Medical Academy in Białystok, Ph.D was Franciszka Bakun and carer School - Professor Witold Stasiewicz [3-5].



The first director of the School of Nursing at Medical Academy in Białystok - Professor Franciszka Bakun, source: photo courtesy of Franciszka Bakun

Diploma the nursing school graduate. Source: document courtesy of Ewa Brażuk-Tabor

This day for you especially festive. Today you received your diplomas. In this way, after two years of learning, you have finished school and entered the family of the NHS staff. Now you are at the beginning of an independent career. You are very young, but old enough to understand the necessity of gaining and maintaining your professional training. The workplace will become a second home to you. The Health Service facilities

She was not only initiated the establishment of the Nursing School; she was a founder and director. She had a proper education, but also a an ideal character and high morale. As the director has made every effort to provide students with the best conditions in the school. However, in return she expected from them persistent and systematic work on myself.

Franciszka Bakun was born in 1924 in Choroszcz in 1952. She graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at the Medical University of Warsaw.

In 1963, she received the degree of Doctor of Medicine, and the doctoral degree in 1974. She not only initiated the establishment of the Nursing School but was also a founder and director. Bakun was the first head of the Department of Pediatrics of Propedeutics of the Medical Academy from 1973 to 1975, and then in 1975 to 1978, she was head of the Department of Pediatrics II. She had a specialization in pediatric cardiology and was a member of the Polish and the International Society of Pediatrics. Franciszka Bakun was awarded a Gold Cross of Merit Polish State Millennium Medal for her exemplary work in the National Health Service and a Medal of Merit for her work in the Białystok region.

Conflict of interest

None of the authors have any conflicts of interest.

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