“I might compare a parasitologist to an orchid. He requires long and careful nurturing, he develops slowly, and he is himself a parasite in that he is dependent on many other sciences for material aid. But when he comes to flower he is a rare and beautiful object, scientifically speaking, and is usually slow in going to seed. He may not always smell like an orchid, but we can’t have everything.”—Asa C. Chandler (1946, p. 221)

Birth deposits most future scientists within a standard deviation or so of average, with life proceeding with its typical bumps and ruts. For a few, however, life begins as or soon transpires into a Homeric challenge. Those who emerge from such beginnings to widely contribute to humanity become mankind’s cherished dignitaries—exemplars promulgating the legitimacy of hope and lending encouragement for progress. Zbigniew Kabata, bestowed with the American Society of Parasitologists Eminent Parasitologist Award in 2003 and who died at age 90 on 4 July 2014 in Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada, was such a giant.

Zbigniew was born on 17 March 1924 in Jeremicze, Poland. The son of a career army officer, he graduated from primary school in 1936 and was enrolled at age 13 in the Cadet Corps secondary school at the Marshal Józef Piłsudski Military Academy in Lwów. Already interested in the sea and sailing, young Zbigniew collected pictures of sailing ships and even sailed to Scandinavia aboard the training yacht Zawisza Czarny. In 1939, the Nazi invasion of Poland cut his childhood and formal studies short, and he soon was participating in acts contributing to the Polish underground resistance. In the spring of 1941 at age 17 he joined the Arma Krajowa (Polish Home Army, a.k.a. Underground or National Army). His decision to fight was instinctive, and he was reported to have later stated, “The good was on our side, the evil—on theirs. The good needed to be assisted, the evil—destroyed” (Paszkowska, 2011). He fought first as part of a military guerilla detachment, the Jedrusie, in the Świętokrzyskie Mountains in central Poland; his partisan force was sometimes referred to by the local citizenry as the “grey people from the...