Janusz Zakrzewski passed away on 26 October 2008 in Warsaw, Poland, after a long illness.

Zakrzewski studied physics at the University of Warsaw and obtained a PhD in physics at Bristol University in 1961. He was employed at the University of Warsaw from 1956 until his retirement in 2002. In the early stage of his career he was involved in emulsion studies of hypernuclei and participated in the discovery of heavy hypernuclei, as well as the first observation of a double hypernucleus in 1963. In the following years he was involved in K meson physics at the Rutherford High Energy Laboratory in the UK and in studies of interactions of high-energy hadrons with nuclei at Dubna and Serpukhov. In 1983/1984 he took part in the UA2 Collaboration at CERN.

He was an active member of the Polish physics community and a renowned academic. Always interested in teaching, he devoted much effort to the education of young physicists, which he regarded as important as scientific research. He had a natural ability for the clear expression of thoughts and his public appearances were always perfectly prepared. He is also a co-author (with A K Wroblewski) of a popular Polish student textbook on basic physics.

Zakrzewski was an energetic proponent of co-operation between Polish and German universities and scientific institutions in the 1970s and 1980s, when Polish–German political relations were uneasy. His efforts resulted in a collaboration with DESY, which started with small-scale participation in the TASSO group and soon transformed into the full involvement of the Polish high-energy-physics community in the HERA project and the ZEUS and H1 experiments.

He was vice-rector of the University of Warsaw (1981–1982) and held functions at the Faculty of Physics. He was dean of the Faculty (1972–1975); and head of the High-Energy Physics Department (1971–1994). In 1976 he was elected member of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He was a member of the European Physical Society and received the society's Cecil Powell Medal in 1990. He was also president of the Polish Physical Society (1987–1991) and was honoured by the Marian Smoluchowski–Emil Warburg Medal of the Polish Physical Society–Deutsche Physikalische Gesellschaft in 2001.

Zakrzewski had many cultural interests including music, history and literature. He will be missed as a good friend, a passionate physicist, a person with a lively sense of humour and impeccable manners.

Jacek Ciborowski.