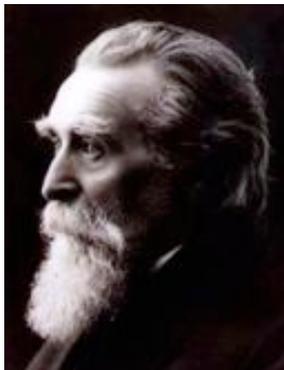


## JONAS BASANAVICIUS MONUMENT (LITHUANIA)



**Jonas Basanavicius** (1851 - 1927) was a scientist, physician, ideologist of Lithuanian national movement, the founder and editor of the first prohibited newspaper of national revival *Ausra*. He was the most significant figure of the national Renaissance of Lithuania at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century. As a member of the Council of Lithuania, he was a signer of the Act of Independence of Lithuania on February 16, 1918. J. Basanavicius is often given a unique informal honorific title of the "Patriarch of the Nation" for his contributions and help in re-establishing the Lithuanian state.

Basanavicius initiated the foundation of Lithuanian Science Society in 1907 and was proclaimed its Chairman. He made research studies on Lithuanian history and culture, and collected data on folklore. He wrote about 40 works on history, archaeology, cultural history, ethnography, folklore studies, linguistics and medicine.

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Jonas Basanavicius visited the small town of Utena and worked here researching the burial mounds and castle-hills of Utena land. He walked along the longest street of Utena, along the part of the highway Saint Petersburg – Warsaw without any suspicion that it will be called by his name soon and that the monument will be erected in his honour.

### Monument history and restoration

The monument was designed and built in 1934 to honour J. Basanavicius for his merits to Lithuanian nation.

The author of the monument Boleslovas Plunge was a teacher, an artist and a photographer. He participated in many exhibitions and created over 500 paintings. In 1941 he was exiled to Siberia and returned to Lithuania in 1963. J. Basanavicius bust was the only one sculpture made by his hands and the old podium of czar Alexandre II sculpture was used as a podium for the monument of Jonas Basanavicius.

The composition of the monument is traditional: the lower part of the podium is made from stair-steps while the top is made from a rectangular on which stands the bust of Jonas Basanavicius. On the front part of the podium there is a metal panel with a record: „Dr. J. Basanavicius”.





The monument was renovated during the years 1958 – 1959 and in 1988 the author of the monument – B. Plunge – restored it by himself. The environment around the monument is arranged by Antanas Laurinavicius – the monument stands lifted in a small square which is surrounded by lime trees and there are stairs from the street side leading to the monument. In 1992 the monument was registered in the Registry of Cultural Heritage and renovated again in 1995 – 2001 by plastering the podium and painting the bust white.

Inhabitants of Utena saved the monument of Jonas Basanavicius from the destruction during the long period of Soviet occupation and for many years it is an important place and a great part of the historical and cultural life of Utena town.

