

DANUTA MARIA POPRAWA

24.12.1931–15.05.2025



Fig. 1. Danuta Poprawa, 2009.

Danuta Poprawa (Fig. 1) was born in Sanok on December 24, 1931. In Sanok, she completed both primary and secondary school, and graduated in 1951. That same year, she began her geological studies in the Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences of the Jagiellonian University. After the geology programme was discontinued at the Jagiellonian University on the decision of the Minister of Higher Education, she continued her studies at the AGH University of Science and Technology, in the Faculty of Geological Exploration. She obtained a Master's degree in Geology on the basis of her thesis, titled "*The Geological Structure of the Zaluz Area*", written in 1956 under the supervision of Professor Marian Książkiewicz.

Danuta Poprawa joined the Polish Geological Society (PTG) in 1952. From 1979–1999, she served as the Chair of the Kraków Branch of the Polish Geological Society and, from 1977 as an Honorary Member and long-time member of the PTG's Main Board. During her presidency, in the Kraków Branch of the PTG scientific lectures were held every Monday in the building on Oleandry Street (Institute of Geological Sciences, Jagiellonian University). Twice a year (in spring and fall), field trips with a focus on current geological problems were organised. These included, among other things, excursions to the Kraków-Częstochowa Upland to study karst issues and sinkhole hazards, trips to the horst of the Kraków Gate, to Tyniec, and to the Krzeszowice Graben. The excursions were led by Prof. R. Gradziński, Prof. J. Rutkowski, and many other prominent geologists. Under the leadership of Danuta Poprawa, the Kraków Branch became one of the most active and

effective branches of the PTG in Poland. As a leader, she co-organized five PTG Congresses and was the main organizer of the 67th PTG Congress in Szczyrk, in 1996.

Immediately after graduation in her geological studies in 1956, Danuta Poprawa began work at the Carpathian Branch of the Geological Institute, in Kraków. In the opinion of Prof. M. Książkiewicz, she was "very talented, diligent, and promising to become an excellent scientific worker." In her first year of work, she was employed as an assistant, then as a senior assistant, and from 1963 as an adjunct. Between 1957 and 1959, she authored or co-authored with L. Koszarski and W. Nowak nine geological studies, with a focus on various areas of the Carpathians and the Carpathian Foredeep. Among her independent studies was the "Geological Map of the Pszczyna Area", at a scale of 1:50 000. Her first geological works and maps included the Wojnicz, Kęty, Pszczyna and Lesko sheets, where she supervised drilling in the Quaternary deposits.

From the 1960s, her professional interests turned towards the hydrogeology of the Carpathians and their foreland, especially issues related to occurrences of mineral and thermal waters. She conducted field research, designed study projects, and supervised drilling operations for numerous wells, including Polańczyk IG-2, Hruby Regiel IG-2, Siwa Woda IG-1, Poręba Wielka IG-1, Rabka IG-1, Bańska IG-1 (Fig. 2), Rudawka Rymanowska IG-1, Jaworze IG-1 and IG-2, Skoczna IG-1, Nowy Targ IG-1, Bykowce IG-1, and many others. She documented mineral water resources for spa resorts and thermal waters in the Podhale region for heating purposes. Her work led to the discovery and documentation

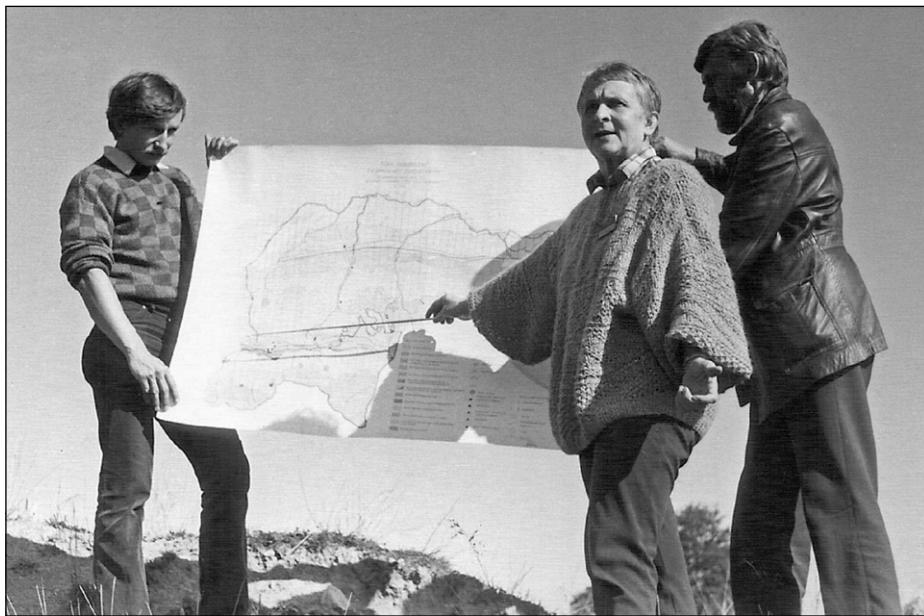


Fig. 2. D. Poprawa explains the Bańska IG-1 drilling profile, with W. Rączkowski on the left, Z. Paul on the right. The LXVIII Congress of the Polish Geological Society in the Tatra Mountains and Podhale, Zakopane, 2–4.10.1997.

of thermal water resources in Poręba Wielka, mineral waters in the Rabka and Polańczyk regions, and oxalate waters near Baligród.

She also co-authored a monograph on the groundwater resources in the Carpathians, a catalogue of Carpathian landslides for the Kraków and Katowice provinces, the Hydrogeological Overview Map of Poland at a scale of 1:300 000 (Nowy Sącz sheet), documentation of the Roźnów II pumped-storage power plant, and the Geological-Engineering Map at a scale of 1:50 000 (Męcina sheet).

In 1971, Danuta Poprawa (Fig. 3) obtained a doctoral degree, on the basis of her thesis “*Hydrogeology of the Foreland of the Dukla Nappe between the Osława and Wetlina Rivers (with particular emphasis on mineral waters)*”, supervised by Prof. Andrzej Michalik. Recognizing the scientific potential and organizational skills of Danuta Poprawa, the Institute’s leadership entrusted her with a series of managerial roles. She climbed all the steps of the ladder of her professional career in the Carpathian Branch of the Polish Geological Institute (PGI).

In 1972, following Prof. A. Michalik, she became the Head of the Hydrogeology and Engineering Geology Laboratory, and between 1973–1976, she served as Deputy Head of the Carpathian Branch, overseeing hydrogeology, engineering geology, rock resources, geological mapping, and administration. From 1977 to 1982, D. Poprawa was the Head of the Department of Deposit Geology and Mineral Resources of the Carpathians, in the Carpathian Branch of the PGI. The next years proved to be the most significant in her professional career. She headed the Carpathian Branch

in 1978–1979 and 1982–1987 and then served as its Director from 1987 to 2002. Danuta Poprawa worked for the Polish Geological Institute – Polish Research Institute until December 31, 2003. As the Director of the Carpathian Branch, she established an informal team of directors from the regional branches, which she chaired. This team (“the united regional branches”) significantly influenced the headquarters on nominations and research planning, the shaping staffing policies, and project allocations, contributing to the development of the regional branches.

She was actively participated in the development of the Polish Geological Institute, taking part in the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the Polish Geological Institute (Fig. 4), and giving press and radio interviews about Institute activities and research plans (Fig. 5).

During her professional career, she organized conferences on landslides, following the occurrence of landslide disasters, and their negative impact on infrastructure and buildings (Fig. 6), and she co-organized a meeting with representatives of the European Investment Bank to secure funds for repairing the damage caused by landslides.

Dr. Danuta Poprawa was a passionate advocate for Polish–Slovak geological collaboration. Thanks to her efforts, this cooperation lasted for over forty years, resulting among other things, in the *Geological Atlas of the Western Outer Carpathians and Their Foreland* (1988–1989), for which she was both the Polish coordinator and co-editor. In later years, she focused on the protection of natural features and hazard assessment in mountain regions, affected by geodynamic processes.



Fig. 3. Danuta Poprawa, 1971.



Fig. 4. The 80th anniversary of the establishment of the Polish Geological Institute in 1999. The Director of the Carpathian Branch, Danuta Poprawa, during the jubilee celebration.

Dr. Danuta Poprawa's scientific output includes over 50 publications and about 190 archived geological reports. She was an active organizer of scientific activities, co-organizing Carpatho-Balkan Geological Association congresses, PTG congresses, hydrogeological conferences, and sessions on Carpathian geology and hydrogeology (Fig. 4). Her professional achievements include a rich collection of publications and archival reports: research projects, source documentation, expert reports, opinions and articles. She authored or co-authored hydrogeological maps of the Carpathians at the scales of 1:300 000 and 1:400 000 and edited hydrogeological map sheets at scales of 1:200 000 and 1:50 000. Of particular note is her role in designing drilling programmes and documenting the thermal water resources, discovered in the Bańska IG-1 borehole. These waters formed the basis for establishing the Geothermal Plant in Podhale, marking the first time thermal waters were used for heating purposes in the region. All wells drilled on the basis of her projects yielded positive hydrogeological results.

For her work, she received numerous accolades, including the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta, the Gold and Silver Crosses of Merit, the Silver Badge of "Merit to Polish Geology", the Gold Badge of the Polish Geological Institute, and the rank of First-Class Mining Director. She also was awarded the Gold Badge of Merit to Polish Mining, a Gold Medal for Polish-Slovak Cooperation and the Cyril Purkyně Medal for Czechoslovak-Polish Cooperation. Dr. Danuta Poprawa represented our country in the Carpatho-Balkan Commission on Hydrogeology and Engineering Geology. She was also a member of the Association of Engineers and Technicians of the Oil and Gas Industry and the Slovak Hydrogeologists Association.

The Carpathian Branch was one of the most important places in her life. It was *Her* Branch. We fondly called her "The Boss" („Szefowa"). She was demanding of her staff – sometimes very demanding – but always stood up for them, even when this was not entirely justified (Fig. 6). Under her



Fig. 5. D. Poprawa (on the right) and J. Gutowski (on the left) give an interview with Radio ZET about the activities of the Institute.



Fig. 6. D. Poprawa in her office reviews publications, related to the landslide conference, "Prognozowanie i przeciwdziałanie skutkom ruchów osuwiskowych (Prediction and mitigation of the effects of landslide movements)", in Kraków, 7.09.2000.

directorship, several doctoral dissertations and habilitations were completed. She hired some of the current geologists. D. Poprawa maintained excellent relations with professors at the Jagiellonian University and the AGH University of Science and Technology, both as the Head of the Carpathian Branch and after retirement. Many of us met her at social events at the Branch during her retirement. Her first question was always, "What's going on at the Institute?" (Fig. 7). She was interested in current projects, the career development of employees, and remembered all of us. She was also interested in our families and our children. Perhaps surprisingly to some, she had a great sense of humour. And that is how we hope to remember her.



Fig. 7. D. Poprawa (already retired) at a meeting of retired and current employees of the Carpathian Branch of the Polish Geological Institute, in 2018.

Danuta Poprawa passed away on May 15, 2025. She was laid to rest in a small parish cemetery, in the northern part of Biały Prądnik, in Kraków.

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List of selected publications of Dr. Danuta Poprawa (in chronological order)

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