

IN MEMORY

Anna Olszewska

May 19, 1947 – December 24, 2000



On Christmas Eve, 2000, Hania Olszewska passed away before her time. Her death was unexpected for both her family and her friends, those she studied with, and those she worked with at the Institute of Geological Sciences of the University of Wrocław, where she worked right up until the end of her life.

Hania was born on the nineteenth of May, 1947, in Wałbrzych, into the family of Kazimierz Skolski, who, together with his family had been moved to that town from Kałusz after the Second World War. Hania spent her childhood in the mining community of Wałbrzych, completing her school education there. She left to study in 1965. Having grown up in an atmosphere of professional interest in geology – her father was a mining geologist, and one of the first graduates of geology from the Polish University of Wrocław, Hania decided to follow in her father's footsteps. She studied from 1965 to 1970, one of the better known classes in Wrocław's geological circles – many "geological characters" playing significant roles in the Polish geological services and scientific institutions come from the class of '70. She received her Master's degree in 1970 with a thesis titled "The Boguszów Barite Deposits", done under the supervision of Professor K. Maślankiewicz. Hania, as a student, was a popular person not only among her colleagues, but also among her professors, lecturers and tutors, and among her father's friends – geologists and graduates of the University of Wrocław. She was known as 'Dad's daughter' – Dad was the nickname her father's friends had given him – and was the first child of a Wrocław University geology graduate to herself become such a graduate. Soon after she finished her degree, her openness and friendly attitude to others became known to other Wrocław geology graduates – the members of the Society of Former Wrocław University Geology Students, a society of which her father had been one of the founding members, and of which Hania became a member on the day she received her degree.

Hania's first workplace was at Geological Enterprises in Wrocław. She began her career there in 1970, in the Department of Research and Projects. For a few years she was a member of a team working on reports on deposits of raw materials for the construction, ceramics and chemical industries, including deposits of clays, Tertiary bentonites, and barite. She was popular at that firm, for her grace, sincerity and willingness to help. In 1979, when the University of Wrocław opened a Department of Applied Geology, Hania, as a geologist with several years experience in that field, was offered a position there. Without hesitation she decided to make the change and began work in a scientific research environment – an environment she already knew, as her husband, Dr. Stanisław Olszewski, worked at the University. Soon after that, as one of the first, Hania joined the research-documentation team brought together to service open-cant brown coal mines and associated earthworks.

As a worker in the Department of Applied Geology, Hania was not only a geologist and specialist, taking part in putting together reports and documentation and lending her geological-engineering expertise, but also the hostess and guardian angel of the department. Most visitors to the department contacted her first, be they visiting scientists, representatives of the mining industry or students doing degree work there. Hania also became known for her great sense of duty and responsibility when carrying out her work for the mining industry. She had input into significant papers on, among other things, lacustrine Cretaceous deposits as a quarry accompanying the brown coals in Bełchatów, and the energetic quality of the brown coals of the "Bełchatów" deposit. She enjoyed both the respect of the head of the department, and she had a great deal of authority among her co-workers. Hania won everyone over with her good-naturedness and honesty.

After the reorganization of the Department of Applied Geology in 1999, Hania transferred for a short time to work in the University's central administration section, in the Graduate Affairs Office. After one year there, she returned to work in the Institute of Geological Sciences.

The other side of Hania's professional life was her activity with the Society of Former Wrocław University Geology Students, an organization of around 700 members. From her first years as a member of the Society, Hania was exceptionally interested in the workings of this organization, proudly emphasising that her father had been a founder-member. While still working for Geological Enterprises, she took part in the organization of several meetings of Society members. Her strong feelings about the whole idea of keeping in touch with fellow Wrocław University geologists were noticed at the 1978 VII Meeting of the Society, when she was chosen as its sec-

retary. She would continue to hold this function for a further six years, which was in its own way how the members of the Society showed their trust and belief in her full engagement in work for Wrocław's geological community. Society members above all contacted her in matters related to the running of the whole organization. She knew the names of almost every member of the Society, people from a total of 50 graduating classes. It was her enormous enthusiasm which encouraged others to get involved in the running of this Society, the only such fellowship at Wrocław University.

Hania played a leading role in keeping in touch with her colleagues from the Class of '70, which, in almost its full squad, was to meet Hania for the last time at their

meeting in Srebrna Góra in June, 2000.

Although she had her share of personal trials, they did not weaken her exceptional liveliness and organizational fervour. Her unexpected death on the twenty-fourth of December, 2000, was met by Wrocław's geological community with disbelief and deep sadness.

Anna Olszewska, Msc, was buried in her family grave in the Wałbrzych-Sobięcin cemetery on the second last day of the last century. Her numerous relatives, friends, colleagues and co-workers gathered to say farewell to Hania, and will certainly keep her forever in their hearts and memories.

*Czesław August
(Wrocław University)*