

In Memoriam



Professor Halina **KOŚCIUSZKO (1934-2015)**

Halina KOŚCIUSZKO, retired professor at the Institute of Systematics and Evolution of Animals of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS), died on August 5, 2015 in Kraków. She was an outstanding protozoologist and a specialist in the genetics of ciliates.

She was born on March 22, 1934 in Kraków, where she attended high school, passed her matura (secondary school-leaving examinations), and completed studies in biology at the Jagiellonian University. While still a student, she initially began working at the Department of Experimental Zoology of PAS in 1954 as a volunteer. The Department later became part of the Institute of Systematics and Evolution of Animals of PAS. From 1982-1987, H. KOŚCIUSZKO served as Deputy Director for Research. Beginning in 1988, and lasting until her retirement in 2002, she was the Head of the Department of Experimental Zoology at the Institute.

Professor Halina KOŚCIUSZKO was an academic with considerable and clearly-focused scientific achievements. From the very first days of her scientific career, she was interested in genetic research on ciliates, and in particular, the *Paramecium* genus. In 1965, she obtained a PhD degree from Jagiellonian University, presenting her dissertation on the karyology of *Paramecium primaurelia*. Afterwards, she continued research on the karyological, cytological, and serological diversification of *Paramecium aurelia* syngens (the later species complex). This constituted the subject of her habilitation thesis. She specialized in this field initially within Poland, and then during 1967-1968 on a scholarship at the Institute of Animal Genetics of the University of Edinburgh under Professor G.H. Beale, an eminent specialist in the genetics of protozoa. In 1976, she completed a habilitation at the Jagiellonian University. She held another long-term foreign internship in 1980-1981 at Miyagi College (Sendai, Japan) in the laboratory led by Professor S. Koizumi, where she also collaborated with K. Mikami. Both Koizumi and Mikami were specialists in the microinjection and microtransplantation techniques used in research on *Paramecium*. After returning to her parent institution, she established the only microinjection and microsurgery laboratory for *Paramecium* in Poland. In 1983, she held an intern position for several months in the laboratory of Professor D. Ammerman at the University of Tübingen in Germany. She also went for short scientific visits to laboratories lead by I.B Raikov and D.V. Osipov in Saint Petersburg, to Lund in Sweden, and to Finland. In 1993, she was granted the title of professor.

Her scientific activity primarily concerned the genetics of *Paramecium*. Initially, she also investigated the geographical distribution of the species constituting the *P. aurelia* complex. She established a new direction for this research by applying karyological and genetic analyses. Having developed her own method, she proved that geographically isolated populations become reproductively isolated as a result of a change in the number of chromosomes. She studied the variability of the G serotype in natural *Paramecium* populations and established the occurrence of antigenic polymorphism. Her second course of research carried out both individually and as a co-author, involved karyological studies on the speciation and evolution of the *P. aurelia* complex. Another research interest initiated after her internship in Japan concerned the mechanisms for inducing meiosis and the self-fertilisation process, i.e. autogamy in *P. tetraurelia*. The research was based on techniques of microtransplantation of the macronucleoplasm and cytoplasm and was carried out in collaboration with M. Prajer. This study revealed the existence of a cytoplasmic factor of autogamous immaturity. H. KOŚCIUSZKO published several dozen papers and supervised several PhD dissertations.

Apart from her scientific activity, for many years she was also involved in editorial work for the *Folia biologica* (Kraków) journal, which, thanks to her efforts, has been added to the ISI Scientific Master Journal List. She was also responsible for a complete change of its graphic layout. Since 1984 she was deputy editor, and then in the years 1989 to 2013 she served as editor-in-chief of the journal.

During the difficult years of political transformation in Poland, Halina KOŚCIUSZKO was an active member of NSZZ “Solidarnosc” (Independent Self-Governing Labour Union “Solidarnosc”) from the beginning of the movement. At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, she held an executive position in the Commission of this Union established at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków.

Professor Halina KOSCIUSZKO was a person with a wide range of interests not just limited to science; she was particularly fond of literature and the fine arts, namely painting and music. She was an aesthete sensitive to beauty, including objects from her immediate surroundings. She always carried herself with an air of elegance and neatness. Professor Halina KOSCIUSZKO was a perfectionist in all of her endeavours, and expected the same from her co-workers. She paid special attention to using stylistically correct Polish and combating ‘newspeak’ – a specific style and vocabulary that gained prominence during the communist era. She was a great lover of dachshunds, and could always be seen accompanied by dogs of this adorable breed. We will always remember her as a person who opened her life to others, and as a true friend on whom we could always depend during life’s most difficult moments.

Malgorzata Prajer