

In memoriam: Alicja Stach (1951–2009): a dedicated aerobiologist

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Alicja Stach was born on February 17, 1951, in Szamrzewo, Poland. In 1968, she entered the Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań, Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences and graduated in 1974 with a Master of Sciences degree. Immediately following graduation from the University, Alicja's professional life began at the Institute of Geography. In 1980, she started to study palynology. In 1989, she was assigned to the Department of Geomorphology under the leadership of Professor Stefan Kozarski where she continued her work as a palynologist. First training in aerobiological monitoring, Alicja completed at the Institute of Geology in Oslo in 1991. In 1994, she participated in the next aerobiological course under the leadership of Professor Kazimierz Szczepanek at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. Alicja obtained further aerobiological knowledge at many European Basic Aerobiological Courses (Leiden, The Netherlands 1995, Worcester, England 1997, Cordoba, Spain 1999) and International Advanced Courses (Riva del Garda, Italy 1998, Mt. Cimone,

Italy 2000). In 2002, she enjoyed her Ph.D. degree in aerobiology obtained at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. Two years later, making a great effort, Alicja created and developed the Laboratory of Aeropalynology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań that went on to attain a high scientific level and an international reputation.



Fig. 1 Scientific stay in Cordoba, 2006 (AEROTOP)

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The role of Alicja in aerobiology was very important at a national level. She was an Executive Committee member of the Polish Botanical Society (Section of Aerobiology). Thanks to Alicja's strenuous work, the Polish Aerobiology Network has grown quickly and has included many university centres involved in this discipline.



Fig. 2 Laboratory of Aeropalynology in Poznań, Poland

Alicja co-operated in organizing the 6th European Basic Aerobiological Course in Poznań in 2003, and she was invited by the teacher group to be a teacher in the next two courses (France 2005, Serbia 2007). She was a coordinator of a 4-year European Project, the European Union Marie Curie Actions Development Scheme (AEROTOP), which allowed her to open her Laboratory for European colleagues. Also, the Laboratory of Aeropalynology profited from this transfer of knowledge. Partner universities in Cordoba and Worcester received her and her colleagues in their laboratories, and all of them profited from this collaboration.



Fig. 3 Doctors promotion in Cracow, Poland, 2002

Alicja was an outstanding member of the international aerobiological community. She was a founder member of the European Aerobiology Society, a Polish representative in the Management Committee of the European Science Foundation COST Action ES0603 “Assessment of production, release, distribution and health impact of allergenic pollen in Europe” (EUPOL) and an Executive Committee member “at large” of the International Association of Aerobiology. She was very active and full of energy. She took part in national and international meetings and congresses presenting results of her scientific research and being an active member of scientific committees at congresses and conferences. She was a great local patriot. It was her initiative to design the Pollen Guide-Book for Great Poland in which pollen information is available for allergic people.



Fig. 4 Workshop in frame of AEROTOP, Poznań, Poland, 2006

Aerobiology and the Laboratory were always important things for her, but she also knew how to enjoy family life. She was always ready to discuss problems and to help colleagues and students in their work. Alicja was an open, friendly person, very optimistic, cheerful and warm-hearted. She had a natural ability for gathering friends around her. Alicja aimed high in her life, and in spite of different difficulties, she always reached her well-defined purposes. It is very painful that her time is over and she cannot enjoy the results of her hard work.



Fig. 5 Poznań, Poland, 1985

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