



**Professor Halina Piekarek-Jankowska – In Memoriam  
(8 March 1948–26 May 2011)**

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of Professor Halina Piekarek-Jankowska on 26th May 2011. She was a distinguished scientist at the University of Gdańsk, a lecturer to and educator of students, an outstanding expert in the field of marine geology, contributing generously to the life of the scientific community. She was also a long-standing member of the Editorial Board of 'Oceanologia'.

Halina Piekarek-Jankowska was born at Rawa Mazowiecka on 8th March 1948. In 1965 she began her studies of geology at the University of Warsaw. During her final student years she gained her first scientific experiences in the hydrogeology of post-lacustrine regions, when she participated in research in the Suwałki Lake District under the tutorship of Professor Zdzisław Pazdro. She incorporated some of the materials from this research into her M.Sc. thesis. Already then, as her fellow students recall, she displayed an outstanding intelligence and personality. In 1970 she graduated from the Faculty of Geology, University of Warsaw, with distinction. On the recommendation of Professor Pazdro, she joined the team of geologists in the Department of Geology and Cartography at the newly founded University of Gdańsk (UG), and from 1975 onwards she assisted Doc. Leonard Bohdziewicz in organizing a course in marine geology at the Institute of Oceanography UG. It was in this institute that she climbed the ladder of her scientific career: from 1971 to 1970 she was employed as assistant lecturer, from 1979 to 1996 as reader, from 1996 to 2002 as associate professor, and since 2008 as full professor. She was awarded her professorship in 2002.

The complete text of the paper is available at <http://www.iopan.gda.pl/oceanologia/>

At the start of her career she conducted research in the Kashubian Lake District into the hydrodynamic links between quaternary aquifers and the waters of Lakes Radunia and Ostrzyce. These were pioneering studies in this part of Poland and were of a distinctly utilitarian nature. She used the materials from this research in her Ph.D. dissertation 'The links between subterranean waters from the ribbon lakes of the upper Radunia catchment area', for which she was awarded a distinction in 1979 by the Council of the Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences UG. She also received a scientific award from the Gdańsk Scientific Society for achievements in the Earth Sciences.

In the 1980s Professor Halina Piekarek-Jankowska undertook intensive research into the hydrogeology of the shores of the Gulf of Gdańsk. This work resulted in the publication of a series of maps and detailed texts outlining for the first time the anthropogenic transformations of the water regime in this region. For compiling the Gdańsk sheet of the Hydrogeology Map of Poland, the research team of which she was a member received a ministerial award in 1986. At the same time she embarked on pioneering research into the circulation of subterranean waters in the Puck Bay area. It was at that time that she began to establish a wide-ranging and fruitful scientific collaboration with the aim of expanding her knowledge of survey techniques. She was on several placements at the University of Moscow, the Geological Institutes of Vilnius and Tallinn, the Marine Research Institute in Rostock, the Hydraulic Institute in Delft and the University of Copenhagen. In cooperation with the French IFREMER Institute and the Institute of Oceanology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, she studied in situ the exchange of chemical elements at the sea water – bottom sediment interface. By implementing isotope techniques, she discovered the undersea percolation of freshwater into Puck Bay, a unique phenomenon that was at that time still very poorly understood and whose influence on the water balance of Puck Bay was almost completely unknown.

She discussed the results of these pioneering studies in her second Ph.D. (habilitation) thesis 'Puck Bay as an area for the drainage of subterranean water'. Submitted to the Council of the Faculty of Biology, Geography and Oceanology of the University of Gdańsk in 1995, this work was awarded the UG Vice-Chancellor's Prize in the same year.

In subsequent years, the lines of research drawn in that work were extended to cover the entire coastline of the Gulf of Gdańsk. Professor Piekarek-Jankowska demonstrated that the flow of freshwater through the bottom of the Gdańsk Deep disrupts the hydrochemical structure of the concentrations, distributions and circulation of chemical compounds in the seawater. The discovery and documentation of the percolation of

subterranean waters in the Baltic seabed and its influence on various aspects of the marine environment threw new light on related oceanological research, which is now taken into account in work on sediment geochemistry, the chemistry of interstitial waters, the temperature and salinity of waters and the biodiversity of Baltic bottom communities. The problems regarding present-day geological processes in the sea as complementary to other disciplines in Oceanology constitute the foundation of the research activities of the Department of Marine Geology UG, which Professor Piekarek-Jankowska headed since 1990. In recent years, together with her team at the Department, she expanded this theme to include the abrasion and protection of sea shores, sediment transport, sedimentation processes and biostratigraphy based on diatom analysis.

Professor Halina Piekarek-Jankowska has bequeathed a rich legacy of scientific achievements. She was the author or co-author of nearly 100 publications in hydrogeology, marine geology and marine environmental conservation in the form of scientific papers, university textbooks, book chapters, maps and reviews. She supervised some 50 M.Sc. theses in oceanography and environmental conservation, and also 10 Ph.D. dissertations, 5 of which were completed. One of her main achievements was to create and implement a course of study in Geology at the University of Gdańsk, a course offered by no other institute of higher education in Pomerania. Her achievements did not go unnoticed among the scientific community, which held her in high regard. She was a member of many collegiate bodies, in which she filled numerous positions of responsibility. In 1997–1999 she was a member of the Geology and Geophysics Section of the Committee for Marine Research PAN, and after 1999, as Chairwoman of the Marine Geology Section, she was a member of the Board of that Committee. In 1996 she became a member of the U.S. National Ground Water Association. Since 1979 she belonged to the Gdańsk Scientific Society, where she was at first secretary and later Chairwoman of Department V of the Earth Sciences. For many years after 1999, she was also Deputy President of that Society. She also occupied many positions of responsibility at the University of Gdańsk: she was deputy director of the Institute of Oceanography for two terms of office, from 1996 to 2002 she was Dean of the Faculty of Biology, Geography and Oceanology UG, and from 2002 to 2005 she was Deputy Vice-Chancellor for educational matters at UG.

For her activities at UG she received many Vice-Chancellor's awards, and she received the Gold Cross of Merit and the Medal of the National Education Commission.

She was most assiduous in performing the functions and tasks she was entrusted with. She dedicated a great deal of time to all her students,

both undergraduate and postgraduate. She tried to educate them not just to be good scientists, but also formed closer relationships with them, redolent of the wonderful master-pupil relations of the past. An excellent lecturer, she was capable of presenting complex geological problems lucidly and coherently. She was highly articulate, and this talent to express her thoughts in a precise and logical manner shone through both her official pronouncements and her everyday conversations. For this she was held in great esteem, and her opinions, as ever germane but expressed in moderate terms, were always taken seriously. Conformism was alien to her personality: she had the great and unusual ability to defend her views, which she did stoutly but respectfully, backing them up with profound knowledge of her subject. Upright and honest, she was very sensitive to the problems of the people who worked under her. For her many friends she was a kind and understanding confidante, who always found words of comfort and encouragement for those who needed them. A warm-hearted and just person – that is how we shall remember her.

Requiescat in pace.

Gdynia, 2 August 2011

*Marcin Pliński*