

Chronicle

Urszula Gabriela Czaplńska *primo voto* Dzieszuk (1950-2016), Chemical Engineer



Ula passed away on the 21 April 2016, following a battle with cancer. Although her eventual defeat seemed impossible, even considering the severity of her illness, her passing still came as a shock. This woman of great beauty may have been small in stature, petite, but she was nevertheless strong, both physically and in spirit. From the moment she obtained this shocking diagnosis six years ago, Ula fought and overcame a number of adversities: sometimes those to do with health, sometimes others resulting from human weakness (a poor diet),

while also struggling with her husband's own illness.

She worked with us at the Institute of Parasitology, Polish Academy of Sciences for 36 years, from 21.02.1973 until 31.12.2008. Her first position was in the Department of Parasite Physiology and Biochemistry under the eye of Dr A. Wartonja, who emigrated shortly afterward; following which, Ula worked in the Laboratory of Parasitic Protozoans, under Professor S. Kazubski and later Professor I. Wita. She progressed from Technician to Senior Technician, and then from 1982, to Engineer Technician. Her reliable and accurate work veiled results with strong academic value, and through her own efforts, she learned and implemented new techniques in the laboratory.

Her participation and engagement in research work is reflected in the number of publications which list her as a co-author. Even a brief review reveals 23 such publications, although it is highly likely that there have been many more. She has been published alongside I. Wita, M. Ovcharenko, G. Karbowiak, O. Losev, J. Izdebska, B. Czaplński, D. Cielecka, I. Polishchuk, G. Zolotarewa, N. Kingston, E. Bullowa, V. Majlathowa, B. Pet'ko, M. Stanko, J. Hapunik, P. Wróblewski, V. Sarabeev, G. Rychlik. Many of her works examine the ultrastructure of Protozoa, particularly the *Trypanosoma*, and that of blood parasites and vector organisms.

What made working with such a large group of researchers possible was her ongoing substantive and intellectual development. Following her graduation from the Faculty of Chemistry, Łódź Polytechnic in March 1982, she attended a series of lectures organised by the Polish Academy of Sciences, travelled the world (visiting Austria, Germany, Spain, Portugal, France, Tenerife, Australia, China, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Ukraine, among others) and participated in conferences organised by ks. Prof. Chrostowski.

She would also spend time making hand-made crafts using decoupage. Ula put her acquired skills into practice to benefit herself and others: thanks to her knowledge of foreign languages, she was able to benefit from foreign publications and work on literature. Many of her friends received wonderful hand-made gifts from her: medieval-style icons, jewellery and many other such works. During her travels around the world, she amassed a wealth of photographic documentation, and would gladly share her impressions of her journeys with anyone interested. As a Christian, she deepened her knowledge of her Roman Catholic beliefs and her life stands testament to her faith. All these experiences helped shape Ula's extraordinary personality while also enhancing her value as an employee. A constant willingness to work, to explore new things, her joy and a smile were the pillars of not only her academic career. Her boundless optimism, warm spirit and kindness towards others fostered a unique atmosphere in her laboratory and in the Institute. She detested lies. She saw something good in everyone. She would endeavour to help anyone.

She worked as a Trade Union representative, acted as a member of the Institute social committee, and from 2003, she served on the committee of the „Solidarność” trade union as Chair. She helped overcome psychological barriers. Those at the „bottom” of the Institute hierarchy, she encouraged to study, and those at the „top”, she lent faith in themselves and a sense of optimism, encouraging them to overcome their difficulties and achieve their increasingly ambitious goals. Living life at full

throttle was her motto. She would offer assistance to friends, acquaintances and above all, anyone in need of help.

She loved both life and people; however, life did not respond in kind. Her personal life was such that she had to carry the burden of financially supporting and raising her children alone. In the grim years of the 80s, when the Institute lacked the money even for glassware, and could not provide sufficient compensation for even the basic needs of its employees, Ula survived, even being able to provide a vacation for her children. This slightly built woman set a gas bottle and a tent across her back, and took her children on holiday. Many of the workers left the Institute during this time, not being able to withstand the financial pressure and the uncertainty surrounding its fate.

One day, however, life did give something back to Ula. She met a wonderful man, a widower, the famous parasitologist Professor Bogdan Czapliński, whom she later married. Unfortunately, after many years, her husband fell ill, and later so did Ula. In August 2015, she participated in her final pilgrimage to Medjugorje.

She passed on with dignity; reconciled with the will of God, she did not complain, saving her loved ones pain. She leaves behind her sick husband, a son, a daughter and three grandchildren. She passed on the values she believed in to her children. We are happy that among us there are those who will continue to carry her ideas on... *Non omnis moriar.*

Urszula Wawrzyniak