

Obituary - Waleria Młyniec

Waleria Młyniec, who died in Warsaw on 17 December 2014 at the age of 85, was one of the most enthusiastic EASE members. She was exceptionally devoted to her work and eager to promote good editing practices and EASE everywhere.

Waleria was born in 1929 in Grodno (then in Poland, now Hrodno in Belarus). She was named after her father, Walerian Młyniec, who died as lieutenant colonel of the Polish Army in September 1939, when the Nazis invaded Poland (starting World War II). Her widowed mother, left alone with two young children and no resources, survived thanks to the help of relatives in Tarnów. After the war, the family moved to Poznań in western Poland, where Waleria decided to study genetics.

After graduation from Poznań University in 1951 (MSc thesis on cereals), she initially conducted research in plant breeding stations, but in 1956 was employed as an assistant at the Institute of Plant Genetics of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Poznań. In 1965 her family moved to Warsaw, while Waleria defended her PhD thesis (on legumes) in Poznań and became the secretary and assistant editor of the journal *Genetica Polonica* (later renamed *Journal of Applied Genetics*), published in English by the Institute. This editorial position became her major professional activity for the next 35 years, besides her research on *Brassica* species.

In 1989, she joined EASE, as the first Polish member (sponsored by Jenny Gretton). Waleria attended nearly all the EASE conferences and did her best to encourage other Polish editors (including me) to participate. In 1999, Waleria organized the first EASE workshop in Scientific Communication in Poland (led by Elisabeth Heseltine), Under the auspices of Professor Emil Nalborczyk (Polish Academy of Sciences), the workshop took place in the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw. Afterwards, she co-authored a small handbook, partly based on materials from the workshop, to promote effective scientific writing among scientists in Poland. Thanks to her sponsorship in 2010, the first printed copies of the *EASE Guidelines for Authors and Translators of Scientific Articles* were made available at conferences in Turin, Vienna and Singapore, which was kindly acknowledged in *European Science Editing*. In 2011, she was mentioned in the journal again,



thanks to the “EASE Official Cake” that she made on the occasion of Pippa Smart’s workshop for journal editors organized by Professor Edward Towpik in Warsaw.

For her professional activity, Waleria was awarded a Silver Cross of Merit (in 1980) and Medal of the 25th Anniversary of the Polish Academy of Sciences. In retirement – although her pension was not high – she remained very active as a volunteer, because the Christian faith was deeply rooted in her heart. On Sundays she served as a guide in the Museum of the Blessed Reverend Jerzy Popiełuszko (a priest kidnapped and killed by communists in 1984) in Warsaw. She also helped to

educate young people in various ways and was very proud of her title of Honorary Guide in the Girl Guide District in Rudnik nad Sanem.

After her death, Alison Clayson rightly noted, “She was always warm, generous and positive.” We will miss her.

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Honorary Members of EASE about Waleria Młyniec:

Jenny Gretton: “Waleria was such a warm-hearted lady and a great character.”

Paul Fogelberg: “She loved her editorial work and was always keen on discussing many kinds of innovations and improvements. I also enjoyed discussions about music with her.”

Elisabeth Heseltine: “It was she who brought me to Warsaw for the first time to run a workshop. I’m so glad to have known her: she showed me a Warsaw that I would never have seen otherwise and introduced me to some marvellous people. She was so enthusiastic in whatever she did.”

Maeve O’Connor: “She was a lovely person and it was always a great pleasure seeing her at EASE meetings.”

John Glen: “I am sorry to hear of her death; she was a dear soul and very kind.”