

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

ALICIA GOLEBIEWSKA HERRMANN (1941 – 1983)

Alicia Golebiewska Herrmann, Professor of Mechanical Engineering (Research) in the Division of Applied Mechanics, died at the age of forty-two years at Stanford University Hospital on December 7, 1983. A memorial service was held on December 15, 1983 at the Stanford Memorial Church. She is survived by her mother, Janina Golebiewska, her husband, George Herrmann, and her daughter, Joanna Lasota.

Born in Warsaw, Poland in the midst of World War II, Alicia had a difficult childhood. However, her intellectual skills manifested themselves early and enabled her to derive pleasure and satisfaction from scholarship, even as a child. Indeed, at the age of nine years, she began to give private lessons in mathematics to other children, thus taking the first steps toward a career as a teacher, a career she was to pursue vigorously and enthusiastically throughout her short life.

After completing her secondary education, Alicia entered the University of Warsaw, where she specialized in nuclear physics while simultaneously studying sociology. The degree of Master of Science in Theoretical Physics was awarded to her in 1964. In 1972, she received the degree of Doctor of Science from the Institute of Fundamental Technological Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Alicia's activities as a teacher encompassed an unusually wide range of topics, including calculus, differential equations, linear algebra, differential geometry, calculus of variations, probability theory, statistics, dislocation theory, quantum mechanics, and nonlinear continuum mechanics. Despite the fact that these activities consumed a great deal of her time, Alicia always found it possible to engage in research, and this led to the publication of technical papers of the highest quality on such diverse subjects as gravitational radiation and conservation laws in thermoelasticity. Moreover, she was an avid participant in scientific meetings, presenting papers in the period from 1969 to 1982 at eight Polish conferences on the mechanics of solids, as well as at six conferences in the United States and Canada, and serving as chairperson of special technical sessions in Belgium, Egypt, and Germany. Having become well known through her work to others in the field, she received many invitations to lecture. Enjoying the stimulation of interaction with fellow researchers, she served as a visiting lecturer or visiting professor at universities and research institutes in Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, and the United States, before becoming a member of Stanford's faculty in 1980.

Alicia's professional accomplishments, impressive as they were, shed minimal light on her as a person. She was, in fact, a woman of unusual breadth and depth in ways having nothing to do with academic matters. Throughout her days as a student, she participated in extra-curricular activities, as a gifted actress in dramatic presentations, as a member of a gymnastics team, and as an alpinist, making in the Tatra mountains a number of first ascents for women. Possessing a fine singing voice, being a skilled dancer and bridge player, and having a highly developed sense of humor, she was a major asset to social gatherings of all sorts, and, within the

circle of her own family, she was an outstanding wife and mother, who excelled at homemaking as she did at performing scientific research.

Very near the end of her days, Alicia once said "I have had a good life." Although we must bemoan the fact that, because of her untimely death, many of the revolutionary and original ideas she generated in the last few years are lost to us forever, we can take comfort from the fact that she was correct in her assessment: Alicia Golebiewska Herrmann had a good life.

Thomas R. Kane, Chair
Thomas J. R. Hughes
Charles H. Kruger