

Piotr Zagórski – A Pioneer in Contemporary Coastal Change Research

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During the jubilee 40th Polar Symposium, one of the thematic sessions is devoted to advances in research on coastal zone changes in polar regions. In addition to the presentation of the latest research results from the cold coasts of the world, session will honour academic life and works of Dr. hab. Piotr Zagórski, who passed away in 2024. Piotr Zagórski, a professor at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (UMCS) in Lublin, was a renowned researcher in the field of geomorphology and contemporary morphogenetic processes in polar regions. In the polar community, Piotr is commemorated as an exemplary leader of UMCS Polar Expeditions, as well as an exceptional photographer and a man with an extraordinary sensitivity to the aesthetic appeal of Spitsbergen. For a considerable timespan, Piotr was a head of the UMCS “CALYPSO” Polar Station in Spitsbergen, to which he was deeply attached. It was in the vicinity of the station on Calypsostranda that he initiated and conducted the most accurate monitoring of coastal changes in Spitsbergen, which he maintained for a period exceeding two decades, inspiring similar observations by partners from other polar stations, scattered across the island. He was also the first to provide a comprehensive description of the relationship between the rapidly retreating Recherchefjorden glaciers and the coasts fed by glacial sediments. This seminal work laid the foundations for a model of paraglacial coasts evolution on Spitsbergen. In his latest article, he characterised one of the fastest-growing deltas in the Arctic near his favourite glacier, Recherchebreen. Piotr’s research agenda included the continuation of his work along the Hornsund coast, where he served as a leader of the 41st Polar Expedition of the Institute of Geophysics of the Polish Academy of Sciences, including the rapidly deglaciating coasts of Brepollen. In his capacity as a member of the Polar Research Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Polish Polar Consortium, the Association of Polish Geomorphologists and the chairman of the Polish Geographical Society (PTG) Polar Club, he played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Polar Research Museum in Puławy. His dream was to establish Puławy as the permanent location for the organisation of Polar Symposiums. In honour of Piotr, his

scientific partners and friends wish to pay tribute to him by establishing a regular coastal session at the present and subsequent editions of the Polar Symposium in Puławy in order to create a forum for the presentation of the findings of research on polar coasts, for which Piotr's observations with a documented regularity were of fundamental importance.

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