This book is dedicated to the late Dr Marian Kuc for his outstanding contributions in the fields of Polish bryology and Arctic botany

Dr Marian Kuc (1932–2011)
EMINENT POLISH AND CANADIAN BRYOLOGIST

Marian Kuc was born on 26 March 1932 in Chrzanów near Kraków. In 1951 he attended the Jagiellonian University in Kraków and graduated in 1956, receiving the title of Master of Science on the basis of his thesis, Mosses of the Silesian Upland, completed under the supervision of Prof. Bronisław Szafran. As a university student he was employed as an assistant in the Laboratory of Bryology of the Institute of Botany of the Jagiellonian University. After graduation in 1956 he began work in the Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences as a scientific-technical assistant and after 1 November 1956 he continued his studies as a postgraduate student in this institution. In 1960 he received his Ph.D. on the basis of a doctoral thesis dealing with some selected bryogeographical problems of the southern uplands of Poland, which was also completed under the supervision of Prof. B. Szafran. In 1958 he took part in the Polish Polar Expedition to Spitsbergen or-
ganised by the Commission of the Third International Geophysical Year within the Polish Academy of Sciences. This field work was the start of his great involvement and interest in Arctic bryology and botany. The results of Kuc’s bryological studies on Spitsbergen were presented in his major work, *Flora of Mosses and Their Distribution on the North Coast of Hornsund (S.W.-Svalbard)*, which was published in 1963 as a separate issue of Volume 9 of *Fragmenta Floristica et Geobotanica*. He presented this work as his habilitation thesis for the degree of docent but it was rejected by the Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences of the Jagiellonian University. This shameful and unfortunate decision, arising almost certainly from the personal bias of some members of the Faculty Council, had far-reaching consequences. In 1967 the contract for his employment in the Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences expired and Prof. Bogumił Pawłowski, the then Director of this institution, did not extend it. Anticipating this decision, Marian Kuc much earlier made efforts to get a scholarship from the National Research Council of Canada to continue his botanical research in the polar regions and he successfully received it. Thus, when his employment in the Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences finished, he moved to Canada where in 1968 he received the status of the Landed Canadian Emigrant and five years later he became a nationalised citizen of Canada. Initially he worked in the Department of Botany of National Museum of Canada in Ottawa and at the end of 1969 he was employed in the Geological Survey of Canada where he worked until 1977. In that time he took part in many expeditions to various islands in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, including, among others, Axel Heiberg Island, Banks Island, Prince Patrick Island, Fitzwilliam Owen Island, Meighen Island and Melville Island, and expanded his scientific interest to the study of subfossil mosses. Subsequently, he became involved in private business in the building operations sector which was able to secure his future pension. After six years he returned to scientific research which he carried out in his private “Overland Research Laboratory Inc.” During that time he traveled much and visited many Latin American and African countries and published his remarkable discoveries in various journals, for example, the first reports of *Calliergon giganteum* in Tierra del Fuego and *Cinclidium stygium* in Uruguay. After the political system in Poland changed in 1989, he visited the homeland almost every year and actively participated in, among others, the Polish Polar Symposia. In the Natural History Museum of Chrzanów, the city of his birth, he organised an exhibition of *Araucaria* petrified wood from deposits in the Carboniferous sandstones of Kwaczala which is a great curiosity of the region. Marian Kuc intended to visit Poland again in May 2011 but, alas, we were not privileged to meet one another as we always had in the past. He suddenly passed away on 19 March 2011 in Ottawa and his ashes were brought by his sister Józefa Kuc to Poland and on 30 June 2011 they were buried in the municipal cemetery in Chrzanów.