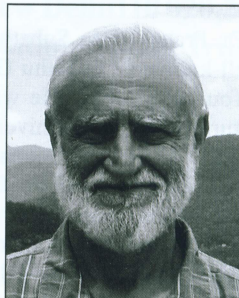


OBITUARY

Hans J. Hofmann - A Tribute



Hans J. Hofmann (1936-2010)

'Hans' - a name so familiar with each and every palaeobiologist who had worked in the Precambrian, is now no more with us! He left for his heavenly abode on May 19, 2010 while gardening at his home. The news came as a shock. A person much taller than his frame, with grey beard and husky voice would not be seen anymore in all those Field Meetings which were always made exceptionally exciting by the presence of Hans. The strength of this great geologist of our times was not only his superb oratory skills but the power of his writings as well. His exemplary contributions in the fields of early life and its evolution on our planet, aspects of evolving biosphere through Precambrian and coining the 'GEON' Time Scale besides other numerous related fields of geology, biology and physical earth are unparalleled. With his research career spanning over half a century, Hans J. Hofmann beyond doubt proved to be a living legend who had inspired a sequence of generations that had started working in the fields of Precambrian Life. His meticulously worked out research contributions, passion of applying computers to simulate living systems and by nature, a truly 'Field Guy' are just a few observed facts that would keep on reminding all his friends and colleagues of the scientific community about Hans Hofmann in the years to come.

Hans J. Hofmann was Professor Emeritus at the Université de Montreal, and Adjunct Professor at McGill University and the Redpath Museum in Canada. He had received numerous honours and awards, including Logan Gold Medal in 1958,

Billings Medal, Geological Association of Canada (Paleontology Division) in 1980, Willet G. Miller Medal, Royal Society of Canada in 1995, Charles Doolittle Walcott Medal, U.S. National Academy of Sciences in 2002 and was honoured as the Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in the same year. Hans was a zealous worker and an avid traveller. He had travelled to most parts of the world that had Precambrian successions and had traces of past life in it. Hans's publication list running over 102 papers in almost all the peer reviewed journals with 105 abstracts, reports, field trip guides, etc. is a testimony to the great contribution that had been accomplished by this legend.

Leaving behind his wife Eva, children Wendy, Thomas and Noah, Hans had also left behind his extended family of friends, colleagues, students and admirers. On a personal note, Hans acted like an elder brother to me, occasionally evocative, at times educative and most of the time, like a teacher. He was the first one to come to help when I got hurt in Russia. He provided me with his warm clothes during a cruise in Siberia and had been most helping to anybody who needed some kind of help in Namibian desert or Australian Flinder mountains or Yangtze Gorges in China. His couple of visits to India were quite instructive in opening up new emerging fields of Precambrian life in the well renowned Vindhyan Basin.

We offer our deepest condolences to all the near and dear ones and pray to the Creator of this universe to give peace to the departed soul. His memory would remain alive for ages to come.

Vibhuti Rai

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PRATAP SINGH

We are saddened to learn of the passing away of Dr. Pratap Singh after a brief illness on November 12, 2009. A well-known personality among the Indian Palaeontologists for four decades, he was a retired chief Geologist of Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd.

Pratap Singh was born in 1940 and had his early education at Lucknow. He attended the University of Lucknow for higher education and did M.Sc. in Geology in 1964. Afterwards, he pursued the doctoral research at the University of Lucknow under the then renowned palaeontologist, Dr. B. S. Tewari on the microfossils of the Subathu Group of rocks of the Jammu area. He was awarded the Ph. D. degree in 1970.

In March 1971, he moved to Dehradun to join the Palaeontology Laboratory of KDMIPE, ONGC as geologist. He carried out the biostratigraphic studies of the samples received from the outcrops and well sections of different basins of India. He always strove for excellence and established his reputation as a good palaeontologist. He also expanded his doctoral study

on Subathus and published a monographic work entitled "the Subathu Group of India" (1980).

He was also engaged in overseas assignments. He visited the University of Hull (U. K.) to work with Prof. J. W. Neale on the Eocene ostracods of Assam and Dr. M. D. Brasier on the material from the Tal Formation of the Mussoorie area. The results of these studies were published in two esteemed journals: Ostracode work in *Palaeontology* and the microfossils of the Tal Formation in *Geological Magazine*.

He retired from active service in 1998 and settled at Lucknow. Though he maintained active interest in the subject, he did not undertake any research work. Appreciated by his colleagues, friends and admirers for his mental calibre, scientific integrity and capacity for sustained labour, he will be remembered for his hospitable nature. He leaves behind his wife, Kanchan, a daughter and a son and a large community of palaeontologists to mourn his death.

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