Dr. Peter T. Bobrowsky

IUGS Vice President

“I am extremely thrilled to receive an income for my hobby. Quaternary research is clearly my passion, and to be given the opportunity to pursue this interest daily and also recognize this activity as a career is incredibly fortunate” is a phrase often quoted by Peter Bobrowsky, Ph.D., P.Geo. After some 25 years of research in Quaternary studies, Peter’s hobby continues to be satisfied with every new day of work.

Born in 1955 to Ukrainian immigrant parents in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, Peter soon adopted the philosophy of his family, which included an appreciation for educational opportunities offered in a country like Canada. The youngest in a family of three children, Peter eventually entered the University of Alberta and completed, in 1977, a Bachelor of Arts Honors degree with a major in Anthropology and minor in Geology. It was during this program that he expanded his Quaternary interests to include geosciences. At the time, he focused on becoming an archaeologist, but recognized early on that a sound background in earth sciences (geology and geography) was critical to communicate with interdisciplinary colleagues, as well as to better interpret complex stratigraphical and sedimentological processes of archaeological site formation. Set on entering graduate studies in archaeology, Peter felt that his interdisciplinary background remained weak for advanced research. As he puts it, “I remember being overwhelmed by the wisdom of graduate students who could speak authoritatively on very specialized subject matters. I so much wanted to pursue graduate work, but felt that to do so successfully, I would have to enhance my multidisciplinary repertoire”.

Instead of immediately pursuing graduate studies, Peter obtained a second undergraduate degree, this time a Bachelor of Science degree. It was then that Peter first met Dr. Nathaniel Rutter (Prof. of Geology) who would eventually become his primary mentor and colleague in geology for years to come. “I remain indebted to Prof. Rutter for his continued support and tutelage in matters related to science”. Although an undergraduate student, majoring in geology at the time, he completed several graduate level courses in Quaternary geology. It was during this degree program that he also added relevant Quaternary courses in zoology, biology, geography, dendrology, etc. to complement his primary focus on geology as well as further expanding his interdisciplinary interests.

After his B.Sc., Peter moved to Vancouver to complete his Master of Arts degree in Archaeology at Simon Fraser University. He studied with two brilliant young professors, zooarchaeologist Dr. Richard Casteel and archaeo-statistician Dr. Jack Nance. His M.A. degree allowed Peter and Ed to expand their shared professional interests and begin their current long-standing friendship. “My foray into international geosciences has been facilitated by the remarkable guidance of de Mulder”. In 1994, Peter became Secretary General of COGEOENVIRONMENT, a post he held for the next six years until 2000 when, during the IGC in Rio de Janeiro, he was elected Vice President of IUGS. This most recent appointment highlights a number of other accomplishments including VP and President of the Canadian Quaternary Association, President of the Pacific Section of the Geological Association of Canada, and International Director of the Canadian Geoscience Council.

Research in sand and gravel lead to the 1998 publication of a very successful edited volume entitled Aggregate Resources: a global perspective (A.A. Balkema). His interest in till geochemistry has now evolved to include the growing field of medical geology. Last year he and his colleague Dr. Olle Selinus (SGU, Sweden) successfully initiated IGCP Project #454 on medical geology. A long-standing interest in a variety of geohazards and engineering geology prompted Peter to publish a book in 2001 entitled Geoenvironmental Mapping: method, theory and practice (A.A. Balkema).

In 1993, as Local Organizing Committee Chair for the Biennial Meeting of the Canadian Quaternary Association, he met Dr. Ed de Mulder (Pres. of IUGS). That meeting on Applied Quaternary Geology allowed Peter and Ed to expand their shared professional interests and begin their current long-standing friendship. “My foray into international geosciences has been facilitated by the remarkable guidance of de Mulder”. In 1994, Peter became Secretary General of COGEOENVIRONMENT, a post he held for the next six years until 2000 when, during the IGC in Rio de Janeiro, he was elected Vice President of IUGS. This most recent appointment highlights a number of other accomplishments including VP and President of the Canadian Quaternary Association, President of the Pacific Section of the Geological Association of Canada, and President of the Canadian Quaternary Association.

During his tenure as a professional geologist, Dr. Peter Bobrowsky has published some 200 articles, books, maps, reports and abstracts on a variety of subjects. His primary responsibilities to the BCGS are aggregate resources, drift prospecting and geohazards. Peter Bobrowsky remains an avid geological explorer traveling thousands of kilometers around the world, often visiting several different countries per year. His home life in Victoria is shared with his wife and two incredible Labrador retrievers (Oreaana and Killian).

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