



OBITUARY

Professor Satyendra Kumar Singh



Prof S. K. Singh (1935-2006)

With great sorrow, we report the sad passing away of Professor S. K. Singh, Editor, Journal of the Palaeontological Society of India and former Head of the Department of Geology, University of Lucknow, on February 17, 2006 after a prolonged illness.

Prof. Singh was born on 14th May, 1935 at Varanasi to an illustrious family of legal pundits; his father, Prof. R.U. Singh, was Professor, Head and Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Lucknow and was an outstanding expert on constitutional law. Brought up in the academic environs of Badshabagh (where the University of Lucknow is situated), he attended Colvin Taluquedar College, Lucknow to complete his High School and Intermediate studies. He obtained Master's degree in Geology in 1957 from the University of Lucknow and was awarded the Ph. D degree by the same University on the Eocene fauna of the Surat-Broach area. After a short stint at O.N.G.C., Dehradun, he joined the University of Lucknow as Lecturer in Geology in 1957. During his long innings at the University of Lucknow, he taught various disciplines of Geology, and worked on a number of research problems in varied geological terrains, e. g. Manendragarh (M.P.), Kachchh, Surat-Broach (Cambay), Bagh and Jabalpur (M.P.), Malla Johar (Garhwal Himalaya), etc. He was promoted to the rank of Reader (=Associate Professor) in 1976. Though he was basically a Palaeontologist, it was field geology which fascinated him most and he always carried out the field studies with great enthusiasm. Those, who worked with him during long geological excursions, know it very well that he was good at geological mapping and had a discerning eye for geological features in the field. His field collections, which include numerous specimens of fossils, minerals and rocks, made during his long teaching career, are his major contribution to the department.

He became Professor of Geology in 1984 and Head of the Department in 1986. In spite of increasing administrative responsibilities, he continued teaching B.Sc. Ist year practical classes of Structural Geology, a subject he always loved to teach and discuss. He retired from active service in 1995 but continued his association with the department as Emeritus

Professor. During his headship, the department came into prominence in the country as a research centre in sedimentology and micropalaeontology and was brought under the Special Assistance Programme of the University Grants Commission.

In 1975, when he took the responsibility of editing the Journal of the Palaeontological Society of India, its publication had become irregular and was way behind the schedule. He worked very hard and put in extra efforts to regularize it within five years. Then, he concentrated on improving the standard of the journal by framing a policy for international reviewing, and also exerted to improve the quality of printing. Little did he know then that these efforts were preparing the way for a shape and get-up that would make the "Journal" a quality publication of international repute twenty years later.

Apart from academics, he contributed to the corporate life of the university as Dean (Students Welfare), Provost of a few hostels and President of the Cricket club of the Canning College Athletic Association. Cricket was a his favourite game which he liked to be played in a sportive spirit. It was truly evident when he played as a member of the faculty team during cricket matches between staff and students. This spirit was also reflected in other spheres of his life when he took unpleasant things in a stride and on some occasions even accepted unappealing views of others with patience. Gifted with a charming personality, he was a gentleman quite accommodating and dignified in his dealings with others. His hospitality, too, was unparalleled. His colleagues and friends remember very well how much caring and hospitable Mr. and Mrs. Singh were to the visitors at home. Welcoming people with steaming coffee was part of his personality. In fact, he promoted coffee-table culture in the department and advised colleagues to sit together everyday over the coffee table to diffuse tensions and personal grievances under the refreshing spell of coffee and light-hearted conversations. He leaves behind his wife, two daughters, a son and a host of friends, students, colleagues and admirers who will remember him for long for his humaneness, dignified style and loveable personality.

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