

## Obituary

### Martin Frey, 1940–2000



Martin Frey, one of the pioneers of low-grade metamorphic studies, died tragically in a mountain accident on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2000. While walking in the Grison Alps, a favourite recreation, one fatal step ended a life that had enriched the geosciences and the lives of many friends and colleagues around the world.

Martin was born in a small town close to Bern, Switzerland, and studied Earth Sciences at the University of Bern, specializing in mineralogy and petrology. His doctoral degree, awarded in 1968, initiated a life-long series of studies of the effects of low temperatures on sedimentary sequences. *Die Metamorphose des Keupers vom Tafeljura bis zum Lukmanier-Gebiet* became a classic study of the transition from diagenesis to low-grade metamorphism, amongst other things, revealing the subtle changes in clay mineralogy that take place at low temperatures. The hallmark of this work and many of Martin's subsequent studies was his talent for linking meticulous laboratory-based mineralogy and petrology with systematic field observations and mapping.

His postdoctoral year at Yale University in 1972, convinced him that science could and should be pursued through international collaboration. This led him to develop and maintain contacts with many colleagues in the course of his career, and is reflected in his list of publications that include some one hundred scientists as co-authors. On his return to Switzerland, Martin spent three years at the University of Bern before being appointed full Professor of Mineralogy and Petrology at the University of Basel in 1976. At 36 years old he was one of the youngest members of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and went on to become the Dean of the Faculty in 1990–91. He returned to North America for sabbaticals at Carleton University, Ottawa (1981) and at Stanford University (1989–90 and 1997).

Martin Frey is rightly regarded as a pioneer of low-grade metamorphic studies, both through original research and as an active member of the IGCP Project 294 'Low-Grade Metamorphism', which he helped to initiate in 1989. Through international collaboration and participation in the

IGCP meetings, he developed an interest in a wide spectrum of low-grade metamorphic terrains, in the Camero Basin (NE Spain), the western Carpathians (Slovakia), the Diablo Range (California), in New Caledonia, in Chile, and the MacKenzie district of Canada, to name a few. As the editor of two text books on low-grade metamorphism, Martin Frey earned the status of the leading authority on the subject. A third text book, written jointly with Kurt Bucher, completely revised Winkler's classic *Petrogenesis of Metamorphic Rocks*. From 1997 he served as President of the UNESCO Subcommittee for the Metamorphic Maps of the World, and in that capacity he was the driving force behind the

publication of the first regional metamorphic map of the Alps in 1999.

Although Martin was not a man of many words, his teaching and writing inspired numerous students, friends and colleagues world-wide. Some of us gathered to express our affection and gratitude in a memorial symposium on 'Diagenesis and Low-grade Metamorphism' at the EUG XI meeting in Strasbourg, April 2001. Among the tributes paid to Martin's work there were also many to his kindness, modesty, fairness and sound scientific judgment. We will miss him greatly, for his competence and his kindness.

RICHARD J. MERRIMAN