

LESZEK STARKEL (1931-2021)

On 6 November 2021, Professor Leszek Starkel, physical geographer, eminent geomorphologist and Quaternary scientist, passed away in Krakow. For many decades, Professor Starkel was a leading figure in Polish geomorphology, but also a person of great international renown, including among Carpathian geomorphologists.

Professor L. Starkel was born on 8 September 1931 in Wierzbnik (now Starachowice) and studied geography at the Jagiellonian University. His entire professional career was connected with the Institute of Geography and Spatial Organisation of the Polish Academy of Sciences, where he worked from 1953 to 2018 in the Department of Geomorphology and Hydrology of Mountains and Uplands in Krakow. He was the head of the Department from 1968 to 2001.

The Professor's research interests included issues such as relief evolution in young mountain areas, altitudinal zonation of geoecosystems and the role of extreme events in relief evolution in many regions of the world and many morphoclimatic zones (Carpathians, Himalayas, Meghalaya Upland in India, Khangay Mountains in Mongolia, Caucasus). Another major area of his research was the study of the Late Pleistocene and Holocene evolution of valley floors, alluvial fans and hillslopes. He was particularly interested in palaeogeography and stratigraphy of the Holocene. His scientific achievements also included papers on applied geomorphology in the fields of environmental assessment and natural resource management in agriculture. Other significant studies included his use of geomorphological mapping. The Professor's scientific output includes more than 750 publications. He is the author or editor of 30 scientific books.

His scientific achievements and organisational activities have been recognised by numerous awards and honours, including among others honorary the Gold Founder's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society (2004), the Honorary Fellowship of INQUA (1999), of the International Association of Geomorphologists (2005), and of the Association of Polish Geomorphologists (2000).

He was also a member of the Polish Academy of Science and the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences.

The Professor was an active member of the Carpatho-Balkan Geomorphological Commission since its beginning. The Commission awarded him an Honorary Fellowship in recognition of his scientific work.

For more than 50 years he was part of the team at *Studia Geomorphologica Carpatho-Balcanica* (Editor in 1967–1990, Head of Editorial Board in 1990–2018), a scientific journal of the Carpatho-Balkan Geomorphological Commission and the Commission on Geography of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences in Cracow.

Professor Leszek Starkel was a person open to others with a cheerful disposition. He was one of those researchers for whom work and private life were inseparable. Nevertheless, his passion was science. Many of the issues presented in his works are still relevant today and inspire the continuation of the problems presented in them.

Zofia Rączkowska