

Oldrich Hungr (1947-2017)

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The Canadian and world geotechnical communities recently lost Oldrich Hungr, PEng/PGeo (BC)...a landslide specialist, a researcher, an educator, a consultant, a philosopher, a mentor, a husband, a father, a grandfather, a friend, a rare breed.

Oldrich and his wife, Klema, fled communist Czechoslovakia in the late 1960s and eventually went to Ottawa, where Oldrich obtained his BAsC and MASc in Civil Engineering (Geotechnical) from the University of Ottawa in 1972 and 1975. After several years working as a consultant with the Trow Group in Toronto, primarily in the field of rock mechanics, Oldrich enrolled in a PhD program at the University of Alberta under the supervision of Dr. Nibert Morgenstern, and graduated in 1981.

Upon graduation, Oldrich joined Thurber Engineering Ltd in Vancouver, BC, with whom he worked until 1996. As a consultant, Oldrich carried out approximately 1000 assignments associated with, among other things, community planning, transportation routes, hydro projects, open pit mines, and forestry. These projects were primarily related to slope stability, the assessment of hazards and risks associated with landslides, landslide stabilization and the design of debris flow protective structures. While consulting full time, Oldrich also developed and marketed CLARA, his successful 3-D slope stability software program, (named after his daughter), and DAN, a computer model for dynamic analysis of rapid landslides.

In 1996, Oldrich joined the Department of Earth and Ocean Sciences (currently Earth, Oceans and Atmospheric Sciences) at the University of British Columbia. Over the next 20 years, he became very well known as a teacher, graduate student supervisor and researcher. He served as Director of the Geological Engineering program and taught courses in Engineering Geology, Geomorphology, Slope Engineering, Natural Hazards and Field

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Techniques. Oldrich's engaging storytelling, unique sense of humour and practical insights made his lectures both popular and memorable. In 2006 he was awarded the faculty's teaching prize. Oldrich supervised or co-supervised 35 Master's students, 5 PhD students and a myriad of undergraduate theses and projects. His very practical research continued to be related to many different aspects of slope stability and landslides. He expanded his computer model DAN to a 3-D version and developed PIERRE, an advanced computer model for dynamic analysis of rock fall (named after one of his sons and, of course, the French word for 'stone'). During his tenure at UBC, Oldrich was also in high demand as a consultant and an expert witness.

Oldrich's research resulted in approximately 100 refereed and 70 non-refereed publications, 15 book chapters and 4 edited books. One of his last papers, which won an award for best paper in the journal *Landslides* in 2015, was an update of the classic 'Varnes classification of landslides'. Oldrich was sought after in BC and around the world to give short courses, invited lectures and keynote addresses, and to be a guest and visiting lecturer. His last keynote address was the prestigious Heim Lecture at the 12th International Symposium on Landslides in Naples, Italy, in 2016. During his career Oldrich received many other awards and recognitions from the Canadian Geotechnical Society, and other geotechnical organizations from around the world. Examples are the Schuster Medal (2008), a joint medal presented by the CGS and the Association of Engineering and Environmental Geologists that recognizes North American contributions to geohazard research, and the Varnes Medal (2015) from the International Consortium on Landslides. Oldrich was elected both as a Fellow of the Engineering Institute of Canada and a Fellow of the Geoscientists Canada.

Oldrich always gave freely of his time to his students, colleagues and the local, national and world-wide geotechnical communities in many ways. At the time of his death he was a member of the Slope Safety Technical Review Board of the Geotechnical Engineering Office in Hong Kong.

Humble, soft-spoken, pragmatic and devoted are some adjectives that have been used to describe Oldrich. He was someone to be respected. Someone with a profound understanding of soil and rock mechanics, a constant desire to continue learning and an unendingly inquisitive mind. Someone uncomfortable in a jacket and tie, but comfortable in field clothes. Someone who could, with his dry wit, tell a good story, and someone who was at the heart of many other good stories. Oldrich will not be forgotten.

Oldrich leaves behind his wife, Klema, his children, Pierre, Nikolai and Clara, and two grandchildren. For the past several years, Oldrich and Klema had a second home in southwestern France where they spent their summers and where Oldrich passed away.

Footnote from Oldrich's family: Since Oldrich's passing, we have been flooded with personal and sincere messages of condolence from all over the world. We are moved by this overwhelming response that clearly shows how Oldrich touched so many people, not just professionally but personally. We would like to thank the geotechnical community for the home they created for Oldrich. His passion for his work infused itself into our family life in so many wonderful ways. He taught each of his children to pursue life with the same level of integrity and fervour. To extend Oldrich's efforts, we have opened for contributions a scholarship fund through the University of British Columbia to help students in the same line of research. For more information, please see <https://memorial.support.ubc.ca/oldrich-hungr/>.