

OBITUARY



Prof. T.V.V.G.R.K. Murthy
(1929-2022)

An eminent Geologist, Professor Tadanki Venkata Venu Gopala Radha Krishna Murthy known as T.V.V.G.R.K. Murthy, breathed his last peacefully on the morning of April 26, 2022 at the age of 92 in his home at Hyderabad. Prof. Murthy is survived by his wife Ms. Roopavati Kunderu, son, three daughters, seven great-granddaughters and four great-grandsons.

Prof. Murthy was born in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh on 1st October, 1929. His father Shri T.V. Krishna Rao was a prominent lawyer of Masulipatnam, Andhra Pradesh. He was third in a band of six brothers. After obtaining M.Sc in Geology from Andhra University, Waltair, Andhra Pradesh, under Prof. C. Mahadevan in 1950, he joined M.B. College, Udaipur, Rajasthan as a Lecturer. As a brilliant young scholar, he developed affection with Aravalli Fold Belt and continued this relationship until his retirement from service. In September, 1955 he joined the newly established Department of Applied Geology in Sagar University. He always cherished an ambition of pursuing higher studies in a renowned foreign university. This opportunity came his way in 1966, when he won a UK fellowship to work in the Department of Mineralogy and Petrology, Cambridge University. After returning from Cambridge, he completed his doctoral project at Sagar University under Prof. W.D. West in 1967 on the 'Structure, tectonics and stratigraphy of a part of Aravalli Range'. He was truly a sincere teacher.

He was an avid speaker – lucid and fluent. In several seminars and symposia, across the country, his lectures and presentations would often make such an impact that the audience would tend to regard him more a Professor of English rather than Geology. As students, we enjoyed his style of teaching mineralogy and metamorphic petrology, often considered theoretical and mind-numbing. Besides, he was an excellent field-tour supervisor, dealing tactfully with the logical demands of the students during study tours. He carried out good field work even in his fifties around Bhilwara, Rajasthan on bicycle with one of his scholars working in the area. His academic focus later shifted to Deccan Traps in the late 1960s when he guided Dr. Krishnamacharlu of GSI for a PhD programme on the ignimbrites and associated Deccan basalts of Rajula in Saurashtra and subsequently to engineering geology.

After superannuation of Prof. West, he piloted the Department from July, 1975 to May, 1979 and again from September, 1980 to September, 1989 till his retirement. Apart from being the Head of Department of Applied Geology, he held challenging posts of Dean, Chief of Examinations, Warden of the Boys' Hostel, Chief of the Teachers' Training College, Sagar. As Director of Academic Staff College at the University, he mentored over half a dozen Orientation and Refresher courses. He mentored and supervised six research scholars for the award of doctoral degree. He served as subject expert

in various university selection or research degree committees. Prof. Murthy was also one of the experts on the Narmada Water Tribunal.

He published more than twenty research papers, besides a number review articles. An International symposium on 'Deccan Trap and other flood eruptions' was held in January, 1969 which he organised along with late Prof. U. Aswathanarayana. Prof. Murthy compiled a commemorative volume of the collection of papers contributed by eminent geologists from all over the world, presented by Dr. D. N. Wadia to Prof. West, along with late Dr. S.S. Rao, which was published by Today & Tomorrow Publishers, New Delhi. Prof. Murthy and Shri K.N. Das coordinated the work carried out by the Department for the Malwa Plateau scheme, an integrated project of 6000 km² area covering structural, petrological, geochemical, geomorphological and ground-water aspects of Deccan Trap country and financed by the UGC, which was a joint project with Vikram University, BHU and Bombay Universities. Prof. Murthy, was associated with Dr. M.R.W. Johnson, Grant Institute of Geology, University of Edinburgh, in the study of Pre-Vindhyan rocks around Udaipur during December 1966 and January 1967. Dr. M.J. Fleuty, University of London, U.K. accompanied Prof. Murthy, during January 1971 to the research areas of Dr. L.R. Bhargava and Dr. R.P.S. Pahuja in Rajasthan. Prof. Murthy, organised a few lectures by Prof. P.E. Baker on volcanism in relation to continental margins and mid-oceanic ridges in November, 1979.

The Department of Applied Geology bestowed upon him the Lifetime Achievement Award on the occasion of 117th birth anniversary of Prof. W.D. West. Post retirement, he and his wife, relocated to Hyderabad in 1990 and led a peaceful retired life with their son and three daughters and their families. His son Ramachandra retired from State Bank of India, while his daughters Sarada, Lalita and Jyotsna followed in his footsteps and became academicians. All of them served as Principals of well regarded and prominent educational institutions.

Prof. Murthy was a Fellow of Geological Society of India. He was an accomplished bridge player, an avid sports enthusiast and food-lover. A simple, unassuming and god-fearing man, he was held in high regard by his students and peers for his exemplary dedication to his work. Recently, on the occasion of his 91st birthday, his students from India and abroad came together in hybrid mode to pay respect to the great teacher and to wish him well. Prof. Murthy was overwhelmed by this gesture and recalled these moments with his family. A rare personality, he will be missed deeply by his family, students and associates.

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