

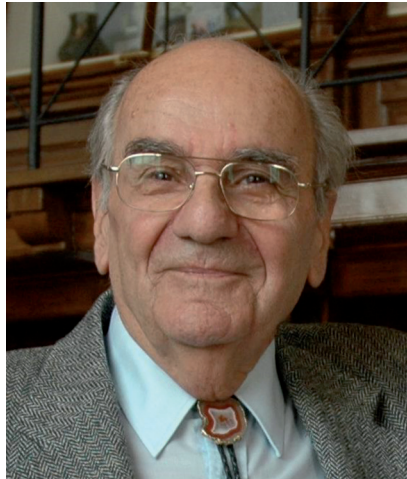
Viktor Dank

(March 17, 1926 – December 7, 2021)

Viktor Dank D.Sc. geol., Professor of Petroleum Geology at Eötvös L. University Budapest, Deputy CEO and retired chief geologist of OKGT (the Hungarian Oil and Gas Company, now MOL) passed away on December, 7th 2021 surrounded by his family and his wife Veronika Szentgyörgyi.

Prof. Dr. Viktor Dank was born on March, 17th 1926 in Veszprém from a family where the father was of German, the mother of French origin. He attended the Piarists' High School in Veszprém, and, as a young man, he became attracted by aviation. As a certified (silver-grade) and enthusiastic soaring-pilot and civil parachutist, after having finished secondary school he was immediately admitted to the National Air Force College. However, since because of the war the College (including all professors and students) was transferred to Germany, without severe involvement in the fights, in 1945 he was taken by the Americans as a prisoner of war and for some time he had to work in one of the famous hard-coal mines of Belgium. After having returned to Hungary, he inscribed as a student to the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics of the Szeged University in 1947. From 1949 to 1951 he continued his studies in Earth Sciences at the Budapest University where he graduated in 1951 as a certified geologist.

For two years he worked for the Hungarian Geological Institute, then, in 1954, he joined the Petroleum Industry and remained faithful to it right throughout his life. Along with the practical-industrial work, he had been active and efficient in research: in the early 1960ies, he submitted and defended his *PhD* Theses entitled „*Petroleum Geology and Exploration-Perspectives of the Southern Part of the Great Hungarian Plains*”. His postgraduate education continued in Milan where after having participated at a course organised by ENI he completed a dissertation on the „*Comparison of the Po-Plain and the Pannonian Basin*”. In 1988, based on the vast personal experience which he accumulated during 20 years of active exploration in the Pannonian Basin and beyond, he submitted another Thesis with the title (“*Hydrocarbon exploration in Hungary – the Geology behind*”) for which he was granted the *D.Sc* degree by the *Hungarian Academy of Sciences*. His research activity – even in those politically difficult times – has not



stopped at the frontiers of Hungary: he was the member of several international scientific organisations, projects and societies as well (e.g. the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts (1968), the Geodynamics Program of IUGS (1984), or the Council of Research and Development of IUGS (1986–1990).

From 1960 on, without separation from the Petroleum industry, he began his proper academic career. At *Eötvös L. University* at the Applied Geology Department first as a part-time Lecturer, then as an Associate Professor and from 1988 to 1996 as a (part-time) full Professor he participated in the education of generations of young

petroleum geologists. His lectures – full of stories from aside the drilling rig – were always thrilling and authentic. Students admired him for his experience and his practical approach to all scientific problems. He stopped lecturing only at the age of 82 when he himself asked for dispensation from everyday teaching. With his wisdom, knowledge and extraordinary sense of humour he had been a universal favourite not only of the students but also of his fellow-professors. In many ways, he supported the education of petroleum geologists: he was one of the establishers of the „*Papp Simon Fund*” brought about with the aim of promoting and supporting research and education in the field of Petroleum Geology at ELTE.

In 1990 Viktor Dank was one of the initiators of the revival of the historical (Royal) Hungarian Society of Natural Sciences (MTT), which was originally established in 1841 for the popularisation of natural sciences but was liquidated by the communists in 1953. Viktor Dank became the first president of the regenerated Society and finally he was granted with the title of “life president” of it.

From 1955 to 1972 Viktor Dank was co-president, then from 1972 to 1986, four times in succession elected president of the *Hungarian Geological Society*, followed by Géza Hámor in 1986 and by Tibor Kecskeméti in 1991. From 1972 onwards, the Austrian co-author of these lines was intensively involved for more than 30 years in the successful cooperation performed in the frame of the “*Agreement on the scientific cooperation in Earth Sciences between the Geological Survey of Austria (GBA) and the*

Geological Institute of Hungary (MAFI) on the basis of the Intergovernmental Agreement of January 15th, 1968.” Not only during his time in the Hungarian Central Office of Geology (Központi Földtani Hivatal, KFH) Viktor Dank was intensively involved – always in close cooperation with the respective directors of MÁFI – to put his stamp on the bilateral cooperation protocols. The Hungarian geological community honoured the Austrian partner to become honorary member of the Hungarian Geological Society, for which he is still extremely grateful! It was a great pleasure to present the achievements of joint geological research in a number of jubilee publications.

The wide range of Viktor’s professional activity was duly acknowledged by several awards, however, his memory, his wisdom and his humanity will stay vividly with us not only when recalling his many decorations but rather by recalling his lectures, his comments and his kind and sometimes quizzing smile when we were still all together at the Department listening to one of his stories.

ANDREA MINDSZENTY, ISTVÁN BÉRCZI & HARALD LOBITZER