Geoscience Honour Roll Citation – Paul Ramaekers

Paul Ramaekers was born in the Netherlands where he received his early education. His family moved to Canada when he was 12 years old, and following completion of secondary school education he entered the University of Toronto where he obtained both a B.Sc (Hon.) and Ph.D., the former in 1967 and the latter in 1975. His Ph.D. thesis dealt with the quantitative analysis of complex shapes, which was applied specifically to vertebrate fossil remains. He employed this approach to interpret data, and it became a principal component of his analytical work that made it possible to discriminant functions to classify data. Today a similar approach has become the backbone of the neural network approach to artificial intelligence. During the period that he was working on his Ph.D., he did stratigraphic and paleontologic field work in the N.W.T. (Ellesmere Island), Yukon, B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Wyoming. His particular interests were the fossil assemblages and stratigraphy of Cretaceous and Tertiary basins, and a number of significant finds were made elucidating the stratigraphy, structural history and paleobiology of several Mesozoic units.

Paul came to the University of Regina as a sabbatical replacement during the 1974-75 academic-year, during which time he taught Introductory Geology, Invertebrate Paleontology and Historical Geology. His one-year appointment at the University turned into a ten-year association with the Province of Saskatchewan as when that one-year term appointment ended at the university he joined the Saskatchewan Geological Survey as a Senior Sedimentary Geologist involved in mapping the 80,000 sq. km. Athabasca Basin. It was during his five years with the Survey and through his work in the Athabasca Basin that he made his major contribution to geoscience in Saskatchewan. Through his several years of field work and extensive examination of drill cores from the basin, he developed a regional stratigraphic framework for the Athabasca Sandstone, which has prevailed over the past 20 years. There have been some additions to that framework, but they have been mainly through the recognition of members and sub-members within his basic subdivisions, and most recently, the identification of sequence boundaries within his original stratigraphic succession. It also became evident from his work that much of the Athabasca Formation was made up of continental deposits having a fluvial origin and a broad easterly source ranging from northeast to southeast. In addition, he recognized a previously unknown marine component in the upper part of the succession in the Athabasca basin, which was composed of tuffaceous phosphatic rocks. He also recognized a regional correlation between uranium occurrences and permeable fluvial, conglomeratic units, thus providing the means for selecting additional prospective areas for uranium occurrences.

During his time at the Survey, Paul maintained an association with the University of Regina through sessional lecturer appointments in which he coordinated and taught the geomorphology, geology, water and mineral resource section of an interdisciplinary course in the Natural History of the Great Plains.

Paul left the Geological Survey in 1980 to become a Senior Sedimentary Geologist with the Research and Development Branch of the Saskatchewan Mining Development

Corporation, one of the precursor companies to Cameco. He left SMDC in 1985 to become an independent consulting geologist, and for the next six years he worked on projects in the Yukon, B.C. Alberta and Saskatchewan. In 1991 he became part of a three man team that carried out basin analyses of the Ghadames and Murzuq Basins in Libya, and contiguous Algeria, Tunisia, Niger, and the Central Mediterranean. The group was involved in mapping the Paleozoic rocks of the area, and evaluated their oil and gas potential. Paul's specific assignment was the Cambrian to Silurian part of the succession. In 1998 Paul returned to Canada to settle in Calgary, where he owns and operates a one-man mining exploration and consulting company, MF Resources Inc, and from time to time his assignments bring him back to the Athabasca Basin.

It is my pleasure to nominate Paul Ramaekers to the Saskatchewan Geological Society Geoscience Honour Role.