

=== IN MEMORIAM ===

Professor Iosif Viehmann
(1 September 1925 – 6 August 2016)



IOSIF VIEHMANN (Pepi, for family and friends) came to this world the first of September 1925, as the son of Iosif Viehmann, violonist at the Romanian Opera in Cluj, and Elisabeta Mureșan.

In 1940, after the loss of a part of Transylvania by the Vienna Dictum, Iosif (16 years old) and his brother Eugen (11 years old) fled to Timișoara with their mother. Here, the young Iosif Viehmann graduated the National College “C. D. Loga” in 1944.

After returning to Cluj, Iosif enrolled in the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the “Victor Babeș” University and graduated in 1950 with a thesis on the genesis of stalagmites.

There is a Romanian saying: “The man blesses the place”. This is certainly true for Pepi, throughout his life. The university assistant position was refused to the newly licensed Iosif Viehmann, because of his declared sympathy for the Liberal Party and for the Americans, his monarchist feelings, and for having close relatives in Germany (his father and brother). Therefore, he ended as a highschool teacher in Năsăud (Pedagogical School, 1952-1956), where he succeeded to inspire his pupils the love for studying, for nature, culture, and... for caves. He founded, with their help, a Laboratory for Natural Sciences, organized school trips and speleological explorations. In 1956, he was finally nominated scientific researcher at the “Emil Racoviță” Speleological Institute in Cluj, where he worked for the rest of his long and successful career.

He never accepted the enrollment in the Communist Party. As a consequence, he was banned from matriculating in any doctoral program, and could finally defend his PhD thesis “*Carst in the Apuseni and Rodnei Mountains: a comparative study with geomorphological and stratigraphic considerations*” only in 1991, at the age of 66.

Nevertheless, his scientific activity was marked by numerous discoveries that gained international recognition: the “permanent drop” in Pojarul Poliței Cave, the ancient human footprint in Vârtop Cave, the thermoindicatory stalagmites in the Glacier Cave of Scărișoara, the cave bug *Drimeotis kovacsi viehmani* in Ieniștea Cave were premieres in Romanian speleology. As a researcher, he developed the Geze-Viehmamm theory on the genesis of eccentric monocrystals (crystalictites) in Pojarul Poliței Cave, explored and mapped the “record” caves Tăușoare (Rodnei Mountains) and Cetățile Ponorului (Bihor Mountains), and actively participated in the arrangement of Bears Cave (Bihor Mountains) for tourism use. As a legacy of his mentor, Professor Emil Racoviță, Iosif Viehmann actively participated in monitoring the seasonal evolution of ice in Scărișoara Glacier Cave. He also attended internships and scientific visits in the Yugoslavian karst, Eisriesenwelt ice cave (Austria), Bergen University (Norway), Nahal Soreq (Israel). He published more than 230 scientific papers and was cited by speleologists all over the world.



One of my professors told me once that “Pepi will never be a true scientist, because he is not serious enough”. Indeed, Pepi was never frowning, because he loved young people, he was very close to students and, as an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Biology and Geology, did his best to educate them.

For many years, he taught an optional class in Biospeleology, attended by huge numbers of students. He founded and conducted the Speleological Student Club “Emil Racoviță”; here, every Tuesday evening, new speleological trips were planned, and Pepi was presenting a cave, a scientific meeting, an ecological theme, together with the geography, the culture and the inhabitants of that specific area. Students, friends, even strangers often attended these special evenings. Many of us learned to take performant pictures, and “got infected” with cave exploring and protecting, by Pepi.

At the age of 85, Pepi was still organizing and conducting cave applications for his students. When asked about his tremendous vitality, he used to say that he feels young because he was fortunate to do all his life only what he liked – speleology and jazz.

His interest for jazz started in his teenage, when he conducted a jazz sextet in which he played as a drummer. Later on, he taught, for many years, the class of History of Jazz in the Students' Culture House and in the Music Academy.

He published several books for the use of his students: *The History of Jazz Music, General Speleology, Ecology, Environment Protection*.

For his achievements, has been distinguished with the title of Laureate of the Belgian Speleology Federation (1958), the "Emil Racoviță" award of the Romanian Academy (1963), the award "Lions International of the Invaluable Services" (2003), Senior of the City (2009), Honorary Citizen of Cluj (2004 and 2014).

Iosif Viehmann was a distinguished scientist, a man of culture who promoted local and national values, but, above all, he was a good person. He was deeply attached to the peasants of the hamlet of Scărișoara and of Gârda village, helping them whenever they needed in issues concerning health and education of their children.

Iosif Viehmann (Pepi) was a prominent personality in the scientific, cultural and academic environment of our faculty. Now, our auditoriums are more silent without him.

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