

VALDAR JAANUSSON 1923–1999



With great sorrow the geologists of Estonia learned of the death of Valdar Jaanusson, an outstanding geologist and palaeontologist, in Täby, Sweden, on 8 August 1999.

V. Jaanusson was born in Tallinn (Nõmme) on 30 June 1923. Very early, already during his studies at Tallinn Gustav Adolf Secondary School in 1934–1941, he took great interest in geology. He was one of the initiators of the Gustav Adolf Natural Science Circle in 1937. It was a pupils organization which influenced early scientific activities of many, later well-known Estonian scientists and V. Jaanusson was the leader of the geology section. Several early geological observations made by him or with his contribution were later used in scientific papers, thanks to their completeness and maturity.

The studies of V. Jaanusson at the University of Tartu and Tallinn Technical University were interrupted by war in 1943. Later he emigrated to Finland, moved to Sweden, and graduated from Uppsala University in 1957 with a PhD in palaeontology. He worked as assistant, docent, and substitute for professor at Uppsala University in 1946–67. In 1966 he joined the Palaeozoology Department of the Swedish Museum of Natural History as a curator; from 1982 to 1989 he held the post of professor. He put a lot of effort into developing the department a high-level scientific institution like it is today.

V. Jaanusson's scientific interests were varied: he has contributed to different aspects of geology and palaeontology, Quaternary geology, archaeology, and anthropology, but

his main papers – more than one hundred publications – deal with the Ordovician stratigraphy, carbonate sedimentology, and invertebrate palaeozoology. This contribution brought him a wide international recognition. He was considered an authority on Ordovician geology. Always ready to share his extensive knowledge with colleagues, he became a friend and mentor for many of us.

In spite of difficult times, V. Jaanusson kept a close contact with colleagues in Estonia.

His efforts were acknowledged in the 1990s when he was elected Honorary Member of the Estonian Naturalists' Society and Estonian Geological Society (in 1990 and 1991, respectively) and Foreign Member of the Estonian Academy of Sciences (in 1991).

V. Jaanusson's enthusiasm and optimism will be missed by all who knew him.

Dimitri KALJO, Tõnu MEIDLA,
and Arvo RÕÕMUSOKS