



Obituary – Lalchand Govindram Gwalani (1945–2018)

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Veteran Professor of Geology, Lalchand Govindram Gwalani breathed his last on 27th February 2018 at his residence in Perth, Western Australia, leaving behind his daughter Shradha and wife Jyoti and a huge family of students, colleagues and friends all over the world.

He was born on 29th September in the year 1945 in Nagpur, a city in central India. He was the youngest of seven siblings (two brothers and five sisters) and an avid reader. His reading list included geological journals and books on spirituality and religion. He was very fond of travelling and experiencing new cultures. In his free time he loved watching black and white classic Hindi cinema and enjoyed old Bollywood music. He did engage in writing poetry from time to time.

From a very young age he was inclined to all things scientific and excelled in organic chemistry at school. His mother Bhagwani Gwalani and father Govindram Gwalani always supported his thirst for higher education. Lalchand (or Lalou) Gwalani completed his undergraduate course at M. M. College of Science, Nagpur and obtained his B.Sc. (1966) and M.Sc. (1969) degrees from Nagpur University, India. Later, in 1976 he obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Bombay under the prestigious Scholarship Scheme of the University Grants Commission (UGC), India. His Ph.D. project, organized by Professor William D. West, was to study the Deccan Traps-Bagh Beds and associated alkaline rocks and carbonatites occurring in the southern part of Malwa Region of Gujarat, west-central India. The research work was carried out and completed at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai (Bombay) in 1976 under the guidance of Professor Ratan N. Sukheswala.

Professor Gwalani was one of the leading geosciences researchers in India for several decades, published widely in the international geosciences literature and acted as an Honorary Editor for international journals (see below). In both 1991 and 2006, Professor Gwalani was awarded a prestigious Gladden Visiting Senior Fellowship to interact with academic staff and postgraduate students at the University of Western Australia (UWA). In 1991, he was invited to the Key Centre for Strategic Mineral Deposits to work mainly with Professor Nick M. S. Rock, Professor David I. Groves and their students, and in 2006 he was invited to the Centre for Exploration Targeting to continue the work with Professor Groves and other staff (Neal J. McNaughton and Brendan Griffin). His invitations were in recognition that he was not only a world expert on the mineralogy, petrology and geochemistry of alkaline rocks and carbonatites, but also studied their associations with important mineral deposits worldwide. In 1991, when Professor Gwalani first visited UWA, there was little acceptance that alkaline rocks were important in the genesis of mineral deposits. Today, it is widely recognized that they are a key ingredient in the formation of many giant mineral deposits including Olympic Dam copper-gold-uranium, Lihir and Porgera gold, Phalaborwa copper-phosphate-rare-

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earth elements and many large fluorite deposits, including Speewah (Kimberley) in Western Australia and Amba Dongar (Gujarat) in India that were studied by Professor Gwalani.

He worked with renowned geologists in universities in Paris (Post-doctoral Fellow in the laboratory of Claude Allègre, Institut de Physique du Globe and Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris, France – 1987–89), Madrid (Ano Sabatico, Instituto de Geologia Economica, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain, 1989–90), Recife (Visiting Fellow-Professor, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Recife-PE, Brazil, 1998–2000) and Perth (Gledden Visiting Senior Fellow, Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Western Australia, 1991 and 2006). During his work abroad, Professor Gwalani became skilled in the use of state-of-the-art analytical methodologies including various electron microscopy and mass spectrometry techniques, and compiled a tremendous database of mineral analyses from the Deccan alkaline province in India. Notably he was heavily involved with the IUGS-UNESCO sponsored IGCP Project No. 314 ‘Alkaline and carbonatitic magmatism and related ore deposits’ that was led by Professors Keith Bell, Jörg Keller and Lia N. Kogarko. Following his visit to UWA in 2006, he settled in Perth with his family and worked up until 2012 with Speewah Metals Ltd. on their fluorite deposit at Speewah in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. He

published several papers on this deposit and the Cummins Range carbonatite, also in the Kimberley region, in association with Australian and Hungarian colleagues.

He authored more than 50 publications including peer-reviewed papers, monographs and geology text books (list available on request), was an Associate Editor of *Mineralogy and Petrology* from 2004 to 2018, and edited special issues of the following international journals: the *Journal of Asian Earth Sciences* (2000 and 2001, dedicated to Nick M. S. Rock and Claude J. Allègre), *Mineralogy and Petrology* (2004 and 2010, dedicated to Nick M. S. Rock and Keith Bell), *Indian Journal of Geochemistry* (2004, dedicated to Ratan N. Sukhwala), *Journal of South American Earth Sciences* (2013, dedicated to Celso de Barros Gomes), *Central European Journal of Geosciences* (2014, dedicated to Piero Comin-Chiaramonti), *Open Geoscience* (2015, dedicated to Lia N. Kogarko) and *Mineralogy and Petrology* (2016, dedicated to Rex T. Prider).

Lalou Gwalani was a spirited teacher with an exceptionally modest and appreciative nature. He attracted generations of students by his simple living and high thinking. He was honest in his teaching and research, and very zealously administered the responsibility of editorship. Until the final hours of his life, he worked very passionately. He was a well-known figure in the geosciences community, especially the people working on alkaline rocks and carbonatites, and made an important contribution to Indian, Australian and international geological knowledge.