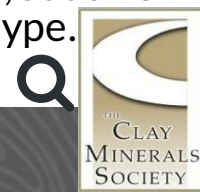


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Article navigation

Volume 64, Number 1

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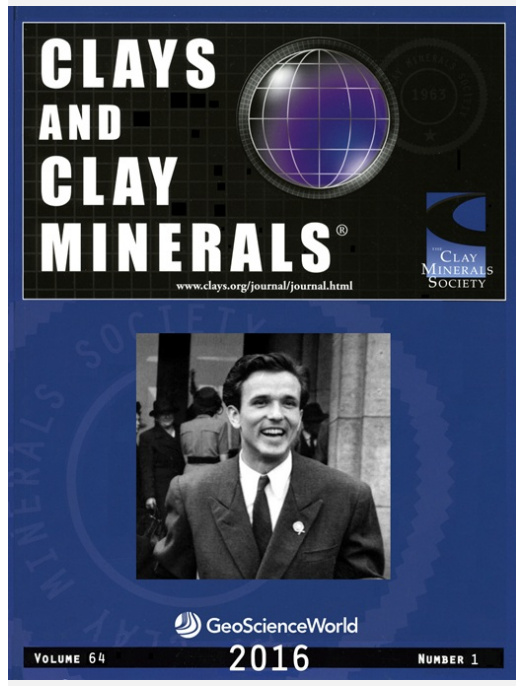
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RESEARCH ARTICLE | FEBRUARY 01, 2016

The Beat of My Heart

Jiří Kouta

Clays and Clay Minerals (2016) 64 (1): 3-74.



[Previous Article](#)

Article Contents

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I am a geologist. My heart belongs to geology and to all people of good will on this Earth. Even though this introduction begins the account of the trials and tribulations of my life, I actually wrote it last. While writing, from time to time, I kept asking myself some burning questions: Why did I actually decide to write about the most significant events that I encountered in the twentieth century? Why did I decide to write about a man from a small town in eastern Bohemia, which, granted, lies in a part of Europe close to its geographical center,...

First Page Preview

PREFACE

The articles published in this journal normally report the results of peer-reviewed scientific research, but the current issue is an exception. It is a first-person account of the life of one of the pioneers of modern clay science, Professor Jiří Kouta from Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic. His scientific career trajectory was always rooted in his native land, so he was not commonly seen at conferences or in laboratories in the western world. In spite of this, he gained a highly respected world-wide reputation through his scientific publications, and, even though opportunities to travel were limited, he took full advantage of them by visiting numerous international institutions, establishing collaborations, and meeting and working with a Who's Who of pioneering clay scientists, including many of the founding members of CMS. In recognition of the international esteem with which he was held, in 1985 he was elected President of AIPEA (International Association for the Study of Clays).

The Clay Minerals Society (CMS) celebrated its 50th anniversary annual meeting in 2013. The history of clay science and CMS was celebrated in a full-day session of oral presentations, entitled "Some Intellectual Genealogies: Honoring Those Who Came Before Us," organized by CMS Historian (now emeritus) Duane M. Moore. Reflecting the roots of CMS in the USA, the session nevertheless included presentations about some

of the international clay scientists who have strongly influenced clay science during CMS' first half-century.

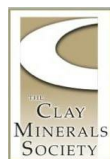
This special issue of *Clays and Clay Minerals* sustains the spirit of the 2013 "history of clay scientists" session by presenting the English translation of Professor Kouta's memoirs. This very personal narrative traces the life and career of the author, and illustrates, among many other things, that the challenge of maintaining "work-life" balance has been with modern society for generations, and is only one of the many (some severe) challenges that confronted life in the 20th century. The author's views on history and social matters reflect his time, experiences, and place. Some of the perspectives expressed are now dated, but they represent well the views that were widely held in the cultural and scientific communities of the time during which the author embraced them. This memoir evidences painstaking attention to the details of so much that he experienced, especially including his emerging awareness of nature in his youth, culminating in scientific study.

In this special issue, it is our pleasure to present Prof. Kouta's remembrances of his life and career, and the role of CMS pioneers in it.

Michael A. Velbel
Joseph W. Stucki

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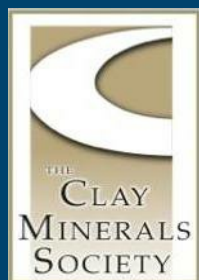
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