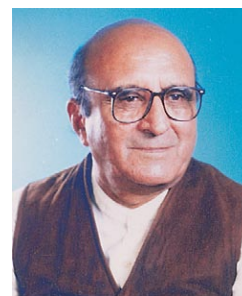




Obituary

Prof. Dr. R. A. Khan Tahirkheli, S.I. **(1928 - 2014)**



Dr. Rashid Ahmad Khan Tahirkheli, an internationally renowned geologist, was laid to rest in his ancestral graveyard in Ghazi near Turbela, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on August 14, 2014. Dr. Tahirkheli was born in his native town Ghazi, Hazara on April 4, 1928. After early education at Haripur, he graduated from Aligarh Muslim University, India, and joined the Geological Survey of Pakistan in 1951 as Assistant Geologist. Later on, he went to the University of St Andrews, Scotland, for PhD studies. Upon return in 1964, he joined the University of Peshawar (UoP) as Reader and Chairman of the Department of Geology. In 1969, he became a full Professor.

Dr. Tahirkheli's contributions to the growth and development of Earth Sciences in Pakistan are manifold. He succeeded in establishing the National Center of Excellence in Geology (NCEG) in 1975 of which he remained the founding Director till his retirement in 1988. He became the Vice Chancellor of the UoP in 1982 and successfully completed a five years tenure whereby he brought reforms in the academics of the University and also established new departments. Over the years, these turned out to be amongst the most productive departments of the University. In 1999 he became the Vice Chancellor of Gandhara University, Peshawar, and remained on this post till his last breath. He also remained Professor Emeritus in the NCEG.

Dr. Tahirkheli played a vital role in getting financial support for his young colleagues to pursue higher studies abroad and for equipping the NCEG labs. His enthusiasm, encouragement, support and personal involvement led to a considerable understanding of the complex geology of northern

Pakistan – the abode of the mighty Himalaya, Karakoram and Hindukush ranges and one of the most rugged and inaccessible terrains. Dr. Tahirkheli's hard work and remarkable grasp of geology of Pakistan attracted the attention of numerous international geologists for collaborative research. One of the best known Himalayas geologists, Dr. K. S. Valdiya, described Prof. Tahirkheli as "an active and vigorous person, always in the forefront of daring ventures regardless of time, place and age". No wonder he was (1) appointed an Adjunct Professor at Dartmouth College, USA; (2) Member of the Geological & Mineral Coordination Board, Government of Pakistan (GoP); (3) elected as Fellow of the Pakistan Academy of Sciences, (4) an honorary Fellow of the Geological Society of America; (5) awarded Medal for Academic Excellence by the University of Etinboro, USA; and (6) conferred upon *Sitara-e-Imtiaz* by the Government of Pakistan. His publications are of international repute and landmarks for the national and international geologists working in the northern Pakistan.

Dr. Tahirkheli was a cheerful, generous, gracious, and tolerant person, a true friend and a good host. It is a matter of pride for all those to have been associated with him. His death is a big loss to Pakistan and geology. We have been bereaved of our teacher, mentor, and most dependable and caring colleague. May Almighty Allah bless his soul in eternal peace. Amin.

Prof. Dr. M. Tahir Shah

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