

Prof. Dr. Viorel Alexandru Stanescu (1933-2006)



World class hydrologist, scientist and mentor – the hydrological community will always remember you with the greatest respect

Viorel Alexandru Stanescu was one of the most important Romanian hydrologists of his time. Through his work and passion, he helped make the Romanian Hydrology known worldwide and through his published studies and academic lectures he ensured that his work will be continued by the next generations of Romanian hydrologists.

Work milestones and achievements

After receiving his engineer degree at the Bucharest Polytechnic Institute in 1956, Mr. Stanescu started his career as a member of the “Danube delta” team and, later on, as a lead researcher at the Hydrology Department of the Institute of Hydrotechnics Studies and Research.

The Romanian National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology was formed in 1970 and Mr. Stanescu joined it that same year. He spent his next 36 years helping the Institute grow and gain international recognition, gradually moving from senior researcher to scientific director. He finally retired in 2005 and died a year later.

International recognition

Mr. Stanescu’s studies and the caliber of his research work in the domain of hydrology, earned him a well-deserved place in the hydrologists’ world elite and he was recognized to serve as an expert in several international organizations.

As a result, in 1972, he was presented with the Romanian Academy Award for Danube Hydrology and in 1991 he also received the Romanian Academy Award for Dynamic Hydrology. In 1997, Mr. Stanescu was named honorary member of the Hungarian Society of Hydrology and the president of the Romanian

Association of Hydrology Sciences. He was also one of the members of the Romanian Academy of Agriculture.

In the international community, Mr. Stanescu left his mark as member of the WMO Working Group on “Collection, Storage, Processing and Retrieval of Hydrological Data” in 1971 and of the IHP-UNESCO Working Group on Floods and their Computation and “Assessment of the Changes in Hydrological Regime due to Human Activities”, from 1969 through 1980. He was also a consulting expert for project of hydrological network of Iran between 1975 and 1977, chief editor of the UNESCO –IHP World Catalogue of Very Large Floods, and CO-Rapporteur WMO in 1994, 1996 and 1999 and, starting in 1991, international coordinator of the topic III “Regionalization in Hydrology” Project 1.1 FRIEND-AMHY, IHP-UNESCO and member of TECHWARE-Brussels.

Mr. Stanescu helped coordinate numerous international projects, taking part since the early years in the scientific activities of the AMHY-FRIEND group for UNESCO, and soon becoming a friend and mentor to other hydrologists who looked up to him and greatly appreciated his unforgettable qualities as a man and scientist.

Over the course of his remarkable career, he published thirteen books, manuals and university courses and over 140 scientific works in Romania and abroad, primarily on the subject of the mathematical modelling of hydrologic phenomena. Some of his published titles are: “Dynamic Mathematical Modelling in Hydrology”, „Stochastic Modelling of Hydrological Data”, „Assessment of Human Impact and Climate Change on Hydrological Resources and River Flow Regime”, „Urban Hydrology”, „Regionalization in Hydrology (International Coordinator of this topic in the FRIEND-AMHY project 1.1 (IHP-UNESCO Program))” and „Operational Hydrological Forecasting”.

Academic achievements and publications

On the academic stage, Mr. Stanescu received his Ph.D in 1972, with the thesis: „Mathematical Modelling of the Critical Flood Waves”.

As a professor, he got a chance to collaborate with important names in the hydrological profession, like Alexandru Diaconu, Andrei Filotti, Paul Solacolu, Ioan Dima, Paul Stegăroiu, Petru Șerban, prof. Ion Vladimirescu, prof. Radu Drobot and many others. These collaborations helped shape his character and carrer, but also made him recognize the importance of mentorship for young professionals.

Therefore, besides his demanding scientific work, he spent a big part of his life making time to share his knowledge and mold the next generation of hydrologists. Mr. Stanescu was an invited professor at Prague Postgraduate UNESCO teaching courses in Hydrology and Hydrological Data for Water Resources between 1984 and 1992. He continued to teach as an associate professor at the Technical

University of Civil Engineering in Bucharest from 1983 until the very end in 2006.

With the death of Mr. Stanescu, the Romanian hydrological community lost a remarkable contributor, although his work and mark will continue to shine through the year, defying the passage of time.