



Mineralogical Association of Canada

www.mineralogicalassociation.ca

OBITUARY



Dorian G. W. Smith (1934–2013)

Dorian G. W. Smith was born in London, England, in 1934. After his schooling, he did national service with the Royal Air Force in the UK and Germany, kindling an interest in flying which later led to a pilot's license. He then studied at University College London before moving to the University of Alberta for his MSc. His timing was excellent: while in Edmonton, thousands of meteorites fell nearby at Bruderheim, and he helped to collect them. These samples became the nucleus of the University of Alberta's meteorite collection, which he was to curate later. He returned to the UK for his PhD at Cambridge, graduating in 1963. He worked as a demonstrator (sessional lecturer) in mineralogy at Oxford University for three years, where he received an MA by decree in 1964.

In 1966, he became a professor in the then Department of Geology at the University of Alberta, where he was to spend the rest of his career. He taught mineralogy, established the electron microprobe lab, and became the curator of the mineral and meteorite collections. His research included K/Ar dating, clay mineralogy, meteoritics, X-ray spectroscopy, microanalysis, and computer applications. He was very active in meteoritics in Canada, sitting on national committees and leading an expedition to the Devon Island ice cap in the Arctic to locate meteorites. He traded samples of Bruderheim and other meteorites with collections worldwide, helping to establish a collection of international importance. His development of microprobe microanalytical techniques increased his interest in the identification of minerals. This led to the development, over many years, of an extensive mineral-properties database and software for the identification of minerals (MinIdent), which is still used at academic institutions and mining companies throughout the world. He was closely associated with the Mineralogical Association of Canada. He organized the first MAC short course with published notes, which became a cornerstone of the Association, and later held a number of positions within MAC, including president in 1978–1979.

As he approached retirement in 2000, he devoted more time to the Subcommittee for Unnamed Minerals (SCUM as he liked to call it) of the IMA Commission on New Minerals, Nomenclature and Classification, where he helped develop the code names for unnamed minerals. He also spent a great deal of time maintaining and adding to the MinIdent

mineral-properties database. The last upgrade was just a few weeks before his death and contained almost a million data items. His attention to detail was legendary and ensured the quality of all that he did.


After "retirement," he bought a house in Brittany and lived as a "reverse snowbird"—summers in France and winters in Edmonton. He returned to France briefly, before he died in Scotland in the company of his family in June 2013.

Michael Higgins, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi




At their annual meeting in Winnipeg, the Geological Association of Canada and the Mineralogical Association of Canada held the symposium "**Earth Materials, Petrological and Geochemical Processes (in Honour of Frank C. Hawthorne).**"


The symposium was organized by Elena Sokolova and Norman Halden. The photograph shows the keynote speaker, the iconic Bob ("ionic radius") Shannon, with Elena Sokolova and Frank Hawthorne.



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