

# **SAXA LOQUUNTUR (ROCKS SPEAK): THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE GEOLOGIST, GERALD M. FRIEDMAN**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this manuscript to my lovely wife Sue, my extended family, and to all my colleagues in the field of geology.

## **FOREWORD**

This book about the life of Gerald M. Friedman in reality spans a time period far greater than his current 85 years. It includes his family roots and the roots of geology in America. It includes his personal views on the impact of World War II on him and his family and the impact of plate tectonics and Cretaceous impacts on the earth sciences and the earth scientists of the day. Although he has kept discussions of his own family to a minimum, no one can think of Gerry Friedman without thinking about his wife, Sue. She is his fan club and cheerleader, life mate and best friend. How he thinks of her is captured in this short statement about her, "the best decision in my life was to marry her."

Gerry and Sue endured a time in history of such trauma, Nazi Germany and World War II, that no book can ever document that period with enough understanding. However, in page after page, there is achievement beyond that past. Overcoming the losses, striving and never quitting, show in all of his actions. He grew up in Berlin, a city known for its music, plays, buildings and culture. He loved the Berlin Zoo, with its science and culture. The changes that happened to Germany and to his family had a deep impact that shaped his life. However, when offered an opportunity to return and be recognized by the University of Heidelberg, Germany, with Doctor Honoris Causa, Gerry's love of Germany was greater than his pain of loss from the past and he accepted the honor.

Several things struck us while reading and editing this book. First is Gerry's strong interest in personal history. He grew up in a large family that told many stories of their roots and this was suddenly cut-off by the Nazi atrocities in World War II. As a young boy, when he visited the previously peaceful location of his birth in Berlin, after it was replaced with the Bindler Block - Ministry of War of the Third Reich, he "feared the needs and purpose of such a huge building complex." His desire to document and maintain history is also evident in what drew him to RPI, in Troy, New York, the home to early American geological "fathers", Amos Eaton and John Hall and in his active part in the History of Earth Science Society.

Another very noticeable thing in this book is his intense desire to share. It is evident throughout this book. As a potential teacher he began sharing his knowledge with his first "lectures" as a boy at the Berlin Zoo and later in his love of short courses and field work, where one-on-one, personal opportunities are the mode. And of course, his chosen career of "urban professor", in spite of the larger personal compensation in the petroleum industry that he could have continued to pursue. His long list of students and their accomplishments is a statement of the success of his choice. Outside of geology, in his life long relationship with judo, he organized clubs wherever he went to share his love of the sport and his knowledge of holds and throws. In Appendix A, we have captured some of the feeling that Gerry and Sue have for their extended family of students in the annual letters they send. One additional and very large example of his sharing is a look at the level of Gerry's volunteer work. There are few in the geosciences that have done so much for so many different organizations. Appendix D has a summary list of his volunteer activity.

Finally, in the early drafts, we found a gap, something was missing. He was more proud of starting and founding the Sorby Medal and the recipients of it than he was about the awards and citations he had personally received. However, we finally convinced him to add Appendix B and C, which list the recognition of Gerry's peers, who have accorded him a significant number of honors and awards, including some of the highest available. We have included the specific citations for the Twenhofel Medal (SEPM), the Sidney Powers Medal (AAPG) and the Legendary Geoscientist award (AGI), which his peers have used to recognize both his insights into and his dedication to geology.

Since this book discusses various levels of local and world history, geology and judo, we have included a basic glossary of terms from each area that should help readers not fluent in that area of interest.

To us the strongest message from this book should be 'sharing'. The book is an overwhelming demonstration of what teaching, volunteering and giving back to your profession can do for that profession, for a career and for a person.

Dr. Friedman and his wife, Sue, continue to be active world travelers. There is no evidence that they understand the words "retirement" or "slowing down."

Diane Chilton-Harper and Howard Harper  
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