

The international community of earth scientists was saddened by the death of Kazim M. Ergin on 24 November 2002. Ergin, affectionately referred to as “the professor of the professors” by his peers, possessed the rare distinction of excelling in both the applied and theoretical aspects of geophysics. He was born in 1915 in Gaziantep, Turkey. In 1937, while pursuing a degree in mathematics at the University of Istanbul, he was awarded a scholarship from the “Mineral Research and Exploration (MTA) Institute” to study geology in Germany. His studies were interrupted by World War II but he was able to resume his education (1939) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he was awarded a BSc in geology. He pursued degrees at Caltech under the direction of world-renowned theoretical seismologist Beno Gutenberg and several other prominent scientists. Upon receiving his MS degree (1943), MTA requested his return to Turkey because his expert services were needed. Eventually, MTA sent him back to Caltech to complete his doctorate (1950) in geophysics and mathematics. His publications on “Energy ratios of the seismic waves reflected and refracted at a rock–water boundary” and “Partition of energy among P- and S-waves at a rock–water boundary” are well known.

After postdoctoral research under Gutenberg, he spent several months well logging in Duncan, Oklahoma. He then returned to Turkey as chief geophysicist and chairman of the Department of Geology at MTA. During this period he organized and directed the preparation of a much needed 1/100 000 scale geologic map of Turkey.

In 1953 Ergin joined Istanbul Technical University (ITU) and was promoted to the rank of full professor in 1956. He became dean of the Faculty of Mining and president of ITU, positions in which he proved to be an effective administrator.

Ergin was the very first professor to teach applied geophysics in Turkey. He was instrumental in establishing the department of Geophysical Engineering at ITU, which has gained prominence in the region. He trained many people who became successful geophysicists.

He authored a book on applied geophysical methods, in Turkish—another first. The book is in its fifth printing. He published several highly praised technical papers in international journals and bulletins. He was a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences, American Geophysical Union, Society of Exploration Geophysicists, Seismological Society of America, and the geological and geophysical societies of Turkey. He served as chairman of the Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey (Tubitak), NATO Science Committee, European Science Foundation, UNESCO Working Group on Seismicity and Seismotectonics, and others. His many consulting endeavors were rewarded by several mineral discoveries of commercial importance—the huge copper deposit of Cakmakaya, near Artvin, Turkey, is noteworthy. Ergin also managed to find time and energy to provide valuable leadership to Tubitak to which he was elected as a member (1964) and later appointed secretary general (1969), and finally chairman of the Science Board where he served until



Kazim M. Ergin
1915-2002

1979. In 1992 in recognition of his contributions to the foundation and development of geophysical sciences in Turkey, Tubitak honored Ergin with its prestigious “Service Award.”

Ergin married Remziye Melek, a wonderful lady and soul mate for 57 years. Their daughter Fusun, and her husband Umit Ozguner, are both professors at Ohio State University; their son Bulent, a computer sciences expert, and his wife Catherine live in Lyon, France. He is also survived by six grandchildren.

Ergin was a contributor to the scientific world and also one who inspired and trained many students and colleagues to advance his own beloved profession. Always willing to offer encouragement and assistance to colleagues, friends, and students, Ergin strongly advocated personal and professional leadership, enthusiasm,

and motivation with compassion for others. And his wit and delightfully dry sense of humor was enjoyed by all.

His professional activities never hindered Ergin’s love and loyalty toward his family. He was a devoted, affectionate, comforting, supportive husband and a loving, guiding father.

Kazim Ergin will be greatly missed. Those who had the good fortune of having been associated with him truly appreciate the benevolence of this extraordinary man. He was an outstanding humanitarian and an esteemed scientist.

Members of his family, his students, and colleagues will always remember him with love, admiration, appreciation, and a deep sense of indebtedness and gratitude. He shall live in our thoughts forever.

—PETER I. BEDIZ

—TUNCAY TAYMAZ