

In Memory of Jack D. Ives (1931–2024)

Hans Hurni

hans.hurni@unibe.ch

Editor-in-Chief of this journal, 2000–2016, and Emeritus Professor of Geography and Sustainable Development, Institute of Geography, University of Bern

© 2024 Hurni. This open access article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). Please credit the authors and the full source.

I was sad to learn that MRD's founding editor, Jack D. Ives, passed away on 15 September 2024 in Ottawa, Canada, at the age of almost 93. The Institute of Geography at the University of Bern was fortunate to have Jack as a guest professor during his sabbatical leave in 1976–1977. On an invitation from Bruno Messerli (1931–2019) (Ives 2019; Kohler and Hurni 2019), Jack spent his sabbatical with his family in Appenberg near Bern. During this stay, Jack attended several seminars at our institute and impressed us with presentations on his experiences and research in the far north. He worked as a geomorphologist with a particular interest in glacial and periglacial landscapes, and in formulating new theories on the history of the formation of the Greenland ice shield. This was new territory for us Bernese doctoral candidates, as we had focused more on ice-age glaciation in tropical areas and the climate change there since the last ice age.

Jack, for his part, became interested in the situation in developing countries, even more so since another colleague of his and Bruno Messerli's, Walter Manshard, was a vice-rector of the United Nations University (UNU) in Tokyo from 1977 to 1980. Together, they initiated the UNU "Highland–Lowland Interactive Systems Project," with field studies in Nepal and Thailand. Our institute also became involved in these countries after 1977, with Hans Kienholz and Thomas Hofer in Nepal, and later Matthias Winiger in Pakistan and myself in Thailand.

Jack visited these countries several times after the mid-1970s, expanding his knowledge on ice and rock in the far north to people and the environment in the tropical south. Together with Bruno Messerli, he developed theories about the origin of floods at the foot of the Himalayan Mountains (*The Himalayan Dilemma*; Ives and Messerli 1989), disproving the suggestion that mountain dwellers were the main cause of floods in the lowlands. As Thomas Hofer discovered in his dissertation (Hofer 1998), evidence for their theory was sparse because of a reluctance by the countries concerned to exchange data internationally. Nonetheless, *The Himalayan Dilemma* remains a stimulus for scientists to study the hydrology of the large catchments in the Himalayas.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) was founded in 1983 with the

support of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Germany, and Switzerland. Based in Kathmandu, researchers there had already carried out research and development in the 8 states bordering the Hindu Kush and the Himalayas. Both Jack and Bruno benefited greatly from the institutional setting and information gathered by ICIMOD. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) continued to support ICIMOD for decades, and Swiss academics have often been represented in the Board of Directors, including Bruno Messerli, Matthias Winiger, Carolina Adler, and myself. Jack repeatedly visited the institution's headquarters in Kathmandu in the context of his later work in Eastern Nepal.

In 1992, through their contacts with Maurice Strong, who helped organize the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Jack and Bruno were instrumental in introducing a mountain chapter into Agenda 21 to address the specific problems of the world's mountains and their inhabitants. Unfortunately, the ambitiously formulated program was unable to develop as dynamically as the initiators had hoped because of a lack of funding. However, the mountain chapter was retained in the follow-up conferences in 1997 and 2002, prompting declaration of 2002 as the International Year of Mountains.

His increasing interest in people and the environment in mountains led Jack to found the journal *Mountain Research and Development (MRD)* in 1981 and to publish it every 3 months for the next 20 years. His wife Pauline Ives (1931–2022) provided essential support as Assistant Editor (Sicroff and Byers 2023). The scientific journal, still published in print at the time, helped to promote the topic of mountain development worldwide. There was also an African Mountain Association and a parallel organization in South America, both of which held regular conferences and could publish their contributions in *MRD*. Jack and Pauline did an immense amount of work as editors to achieve a high academic standard of peer-reviewed articles in the journal, which were very well received internationally.

To ensure its continuing success, Jack and Pauline looked for an organization that could take over *MRD* and provide it with broader support. Here, too, SDC was willing to contribute to the publication of *MRD* both with funding and contents, from 1999 onwards until 2015. From 1999, *MRD* was coordinated in Bern and expanded internationally, with ICIMOD and the Food and Agriculture Organization as main partners.

To conclude, I would like to share a personal experience of Jack. Jack often attended the seminars in Bern in the 1970s and 1980s, interrupting some of his international trips in Bern to meet and coordinate with Bruno Messerli. There was neither the internet nor Zoom back then, so such personal encounters were essential to creating and further developing new ideas. We were proud to contribute and present our own ideas on such occasions. However, we often

noticed that Jack, jet-lagged, would nod off for short—or long!—periods in the darkened rooms during such presentations. Of course, we were disappointed by his seeming lack of interest but were all the more amazed that, despite these phases of absence, Jack could capture the essence of our contributions and was able to reproduce them in his best, sonorous English, better than we would ever have been able to express ourselves!

Jack Ives will be remembered fondly and with great gratitude by the mountain research and development community.

REFERENCES

- Hofer T.** 1998. *Floods in Bangladesh: A Highland-Lowland Interaction?* Geographica Bernensia G48. Bern, Switzerland: Geographica Bernensia.
- Ives JD.** 2019. Bruno Messerli: In memory of a dear friend and a great man. *Mountain Research and Development* 39(1):V1–V2. <https://doi.org/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-19-00019.1>.
- Ives JD, Messerli B.** 1989. *The Himalayan Dilemma: Reconciling Development and Conservation*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Kohler T, Humi H.** 2019. Bruno Messerli, 17 September 1931–4 February 2019. *Mountain Research and Development* 39(1):V3–V4. <https://doi.org/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-19-00025.1>.
- Sicroff S, Byers A.** 2023. A consequential editor: Pauline Ives (1931–2022). *Mountain Research and Development* 43(1):V5–V6. <https://doi.org/10.1659/mrd.2023.00003>.