

# Ladislav Kašpárek left us forever

It is with great sorrow that we announce that our colleague and friend Ladislav Kašpárek has passed away. It happened unexpectedly – this loss has affected all of us even more, as we saw him in good spirits and health in the middle of March, as he enthusiastically presented his new, and ultimately final book at a two-hour signing session at T. G. Masaryk Water Research Institute.

He was born on 27th June 1943, in Čáslav – on the name day of Ladislav, which also determined his first name. However, his friends and colleagues always called him Slávek. He spent his youth in Čáslav and the surrounding area, in the region of the Iron Mountains and the rivers Doubrava and Klejnárka. His father worked as a water management specialist, so he was introduced to this field literally from childhood – water management plans, literature, and direct contact with experts were a part of the family's daily life. In the 1950s, he spent summers with his family at the Pařížov reservoir, where his lifelong connection to canoeing was born.

Despite the educational reforms of the 1950s, he graduated from secondary school at the age of 17 and enrolled at the Czech Technical University (CTU) in the field of hydraulic engineering. After his military service, he began working at the Directorate of Water Management Development (now Water Management Development and Construction, VRV), from where he moved to the Hydrometeorological Institute (HMI) in 1968. At the time, both institutions were located almost next to each other and complemented each other professionally.

In 1969, he got married, and shortly afterward, his sons Jan and Pavel were born. At that time, he was starting out in the field of hydrological forecasting. He transformed part of his family house in Prague-Suchdol into a small department of what was by then the Czech Hydrometeorological Institute (CHMI) – the so-called 'hydrology laboratory' – making him one of the first pioneers of working from home.

In 1979, he became head of the Department of Regime Information. When the CHMI relocated to Komořany in the second half of the 1980s, Ladislav Kašpárek decided to move to the Water Research Institute in 1987 (later T. G. Masaryk Water Research Institute – TGM WRI). At TGM WRI, he served as a senior research scientist and Vice-Chairman of the Institute's Council, and held the positions of head of the Department of Hydrology and head of division. He spent the remainder of his professional career at TGM WRI. At the same time, he continued to provide methodological oversight in the field of regime hydrology at CHMI.



He earned the scientific degree of CSc. in the field of hydrology and water management in 1987 at the Czech Technical University.

Ladislav Kašpárek had vast professional expertise – from stochastic approaches in hydrology to water balance, evaporation, drought, groundwater, and the impacts of climate change. Among his significant recent work was leading the hydrological component of the project "*Reassessment of Groundwater Resources*". He was not only skilled at designing solutions but also at explaining them clearly and often with a smile, even to non-experts. He was a popular consultant for students and colleagues at Charles University, the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague, and other institutions.

A special focus in his work was placed on extreme hydrological events, particularly floods. When mapping the flood of 1981, he became interested in history, especially the forgotten flood of 1872, which he later researched in detail. This interest culminated in his final monograph *Historical Floods on Rakovnický Stream*, which concluded his long-term research on extreme events, especially in the Rakovník region. He always emphasized the importance of thorough documentation so that these events could be accurately captured in statistical analyses and models.

His last public appearance – the presentation of the aforementioned book on 18th March 2025 – was the culmination of many years of work and personal dedication. Although in recent years he faced great personal trials, including the sudden loss of his firstborn son Jan, he remained a humble, kind, and wise person who was able to offer advice, encouragement, and lift others' spirits.

With the passing of Ladislav Kašpárek, we lose not only an outstanding expert but, above all, an extraordinary person who left a deep mark on both hydrology and in our hearts.

**Goodbye, Slávek. And thank you.**

Friends and colleagues from TGM WRI and CHMI

