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Professor Tommy Berman In Memoriam

The Israel Oceanographic & Limnological Research (IOLR) community is shocked by the news of Tommy's sudden demise. Tommy was one of the guiding lights of IOLR from its inception to his very last day.

Tommy founded the Kinneret/Sea of Galilee Research Laboratory of IOLR in 1968, after it was decided that research into Lake Kinneret should be conducted in a purpose-built laboratory situated on the shores of the lake. Tommy, who had graduated from MIT with a doctorate in microbiology, led the setting-up of the laboratory and the training of the research team.

Tommy ran the laboratory for about 15 years: the first period from its inception until 1971, when he took a sabbatical, and the second period until 1998, when he took another sabbatical before his retirement. Thus, his work and involvement with the lab turned full cycle from its founding day to the day of his retirement, although he never really retired, neither from the lab nor from research work. Only recently, while still working on the final stages of a project on the development of microbial films, he applied successfully to the National Academy of Sciences for funding of a project on the effect of transparent exopolymer particles (TEP) on the organic matter flux in the Sea of Galilee, a research project planned to continue until the end of 2015. In addition to his intensive research activities, Tommy was involved in finding and training the future generation of researchers in the lab, in the induction of new researchers into the work of the lab, and was also a central participant in discussions about the new directions in research.

Tommy has always been considered as one of the world's leading research scientists in the field of Limnology and the Microbial Ecology of Lakes and other Aquatic Bodies. In fact, it was he who introduced the concept of the microbial loop into Israel. He was a central figure in the

formation of GAP-Group of Aquatic Primary Productivity and had a central role in the organization of workshops. Even after his retirement he helped to organize the final workshop in 2008 in Eilat (Red Sea, Israel) together with his daughter Professor Ilana Berman-Frank.

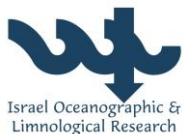
Tommy was the first to measure primary production along the Mediterranean coast of Israel. His research in the Mediterranean was conducted in cooperation with Egypt and the USA after the peace treaty was signed. He accomplished groundbreaking research into transparent exopolymer particles (TEP) in both Lake Kinneret and the Mediterranean Sea. He researched and developed innovative applicable aspects of these particles in the management of water systems and desalination plants.

It was not only in research that Tommy left his mark. His unique character and kind attitude enriched discussions on any and every topic. Personal involvement, commitment and focusing on what really mattered - these were the hallmarks of his approach.

I learnt a great deal from talking and listening to Tommy.

Tommy will be sorely missed by me and by the entire IOLR Community.

Prof. Barak Herut
Director General



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