



In memoriam: Dezső Dévényi (1948 –2009)

By now, we all know the stubborn facts: on November 26 *Dezső Dévényi* suddenly passed away of a heart attack in Boulder, Colorado. Maybe we are over the first shock, but it is still impossible to understand and comprehend that *Dezső* is not among us any more, and surely we are unable to account how much Hungarian and international meteorology lost with his death.

Dezső was born in Keszthely, attended the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, and he received his MSc degree in meteorology and teacher of mathematics/physics in 1973. During his entire career his scientific interest was devoted to the mathematical problems of meteorology. His basic interest towards atmospheric data assimilation (the statistical aspects at that time) started in the mid-70s, when he had several visits to the Soviet Union (in Leningrad, now St. Petersburg), and he had the opportunity to meet and work with *Lev Gandin*, the father of atmospheric optimal interpolation. This interaction probably determined his later scientific interest within meteorology, which was numerical weather prediction and mainly data assimilation. Later he co-authored (with *Ottó Gulyás*) a book entitled “Mathematical Statistical Methods in Meteorology”. This is still an important reference in statistical training for Hungarian students reading

meteorology. In the second part of the 1980s he played a major role in the establishment of operational numerical weather prediction in Hungary by initiating cooperation with the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) in order to adapt their limited area model. Besides putting the SMHI model into operations, this adaptation work also led to the establishment of a small NWP team (consisting of 3–4 scientists at that time), which was the nucleus of the recent (much larger) NWP team of the Hungarian Meteorological Service. He was one of the early pioneers who visited Météo France in March 1991, to discuss and assess the feasibility of the LAM-ARPEGE project, which later became known as ALADIN. (And now it is an essential numerical weather prediction project not only in Central Europe, but also including the HIRLAM countries, who are now working on code cooperation with the ALADIN group.) He received his scientific degree at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (which was later recognized as a PhD at the Eötvös Loránd University) in 1991 with a thesis entitled “The Application of Satellite Data in the Objective Analysis of Meteorological Fields”. Dezső joined NOAA’s Forecast Systems Laboratory in Boulder, Colorado for the first time between 1991 and 1993. After a short break for a return to Hungary, he continued his work in the US from 1995 to 1999 and, after another “Hungarian” break, from 2000 onwards. His work in the US was closely related to data assimilation with the development of the Rapid Update Cycle (RUC) and later Rapid Refresh (RR). During his years in Hungary he had several managerial positions (the highest being vice president) at the Hungarian Meteorological Service, but his main interest focused on the scientific aspects (rather than the administrative ones) of meteorology. In 1996, he was awarded the Doctor Habilitationis Degree by the Eötvös Loránd University, where he became an Associate Professor between 1999 and 2004.

Besides his official positions at the Hungarian Meteorological Service, Dezső was active in the social life of meteorology as well. He was a member of the Hungarian Meteorological Society, the Mathematical Society of Hungary, and lately the American Meteorological Society, too. He attained membership and became elected chairman of various Working Committees of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (for Observations and Data Assimilation, Atmospheric Dynamics, Climate). He was member of the Editorial Board of the IDŐJÁRÁS (Quarterly Journal of the Hungarian Meteorological Service), where he made important contributions both as author and reviewer of numerous scientific papers.

Dezső was also famous for his passion of reading professional (during the early mornings) and recreational literature (in the evenings). He had a very extensive library on various topics of mathematics and physics, but he was also a fan of science fiction literature. He had a keen interest in sports, especially football, and avidly followed European sport events, football championships, and major international tournaments as much as time permitted. He very much regretted that in the United States opportunities to watch good football matches

were limited. This was just another reason, why, in the last years, he planned his final return to Hungary.

Dezső was a well-known and recognized person in the Hungarian meteorological society in spite of the fact that for the last 15 years he had been mostly living in the United States. His special, sometimes ironic and sarcastic sense of humor was highly appreciated. He kept in contact with many of us, and when he came home for a short visit, he never forgot to meet with old colleagues and friends and regularly presented his scientific achievements at the Hungarian Meteorological Society. Dezső was a great teacher of numerical weather prediction for an entire generation of Hungarian meteorologists. Many of us now working in numerical weather prediction or other related fields recognize him as our mentor. He was much more than that for some of us, for those having everyday contacts even when he was far away in space, but not in thoughts. It just means that many of us miss him tremendously, but we will always remember him as the “father” of numerical weather prediction in Hungary, a colleague who never forgot his roots in Hungary, and a friend to whom we could always address questions, being sure to get the most appropriate answers almost immediately.

Although this remembrance is a farewell to Dezső on the pages of IDŐJÁRÁS, we will never forget him, and we will follow the tracks he laid down for numerical weather prediction.

András Horányi and Gábor Radnóti