

THE PROLIFIC MINERALOGICAL AUTHOR, BORIS Z. KANTOR

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I was very saddened to learn in late January 2023 of the passing of the noted Russian author, mineralogist, mineral collector, and mineral photographer, Boris Z. Kantor.

My introduction to Boris started in 2000, while reading my first issue of *Mineralogical Almanac*, Volume 2, as a subscriber. In an article Boris wrote, he described how he developed an interest in mineralogy as a child. His experience mirrored in many ways my own childhood experience upon finding a rock in New York's Central Park and taking it to the American Museum of Natural History to learn what it might be. I was just seven. There, I met Dr. Fredrick Pough, PhD, curator of mineralogy who became my mentor into my teens. At the time of my first meeting, "Freddy", as he liked me to call him, was working on the second edition of his popular book, *A Field Guild to Rocks and Minerals*. Just about anyone interested in collecting minerals or who had a budding interest in mineral field collector had a copy of the book and made sure to take it with them whenever they went field collecting. I certainly did.

Likewise, Boris was introduced to the world of minerals when his mother took him to the Fersman Mineralogical Museum by a small park in Moscow. In an article he wrote about how he became interested in mineralogy that appeared in

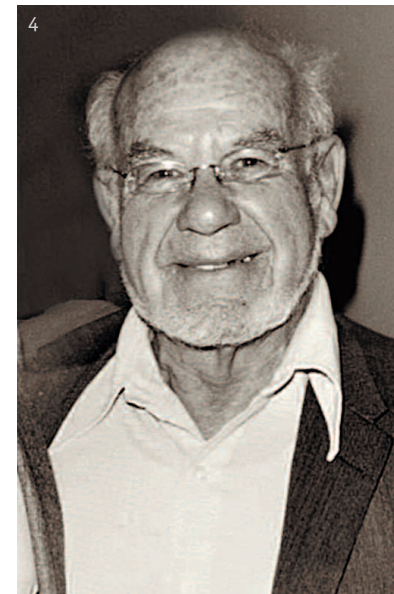
1. At the Hall of Fersman Mineralogical Museum of RAS, Moscow, Russia. Photo: Michael B. Leybov. *Courtesy of Fersman Mineralogical Museum of RAS.*

2. AMNH Mineral Hall from the 1950's, New York, USA. *Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History.*



3. Viktor I. Stepanov (1924–1988), teacher and mentor of Boris Z. Kantor.

4. Frederick Harvey Pough (1906–2006), teacher and mentor of Alex Schauss.



Vol. 23, issue 1, of the *Mineralogical Almanac* (2018), Boris described the impact his visit had on him. "I was shocked by what I saw, I wasn't myself, I didn't want to leave. I was determined to be a mineralogist", he wrote. An interest in chemistry in 1939 as a second grader sidelined his interest in minerals, made worse just a few years later by the start of WWII.

It was not until 1967, after working in an unrelated field, that he felt a void in his life. He recalled his early childhood interest in minerals. It was then that he met Russian mineralogist, Victor Ivanovich Stepanov (1924–1988), and began reading books about mineralogy, including A.E. Fersman's *Mineralogy for the Curious*.

In giving recognition to his teachers and mentors, Boris provided a tribute in the form of an article, "Remembering the Teacher...", that appeared in Volume 19, issue 1, of the *Mineralogical Almanac* (2014). There he wrote about his teacher, Victor Ivanovich Stepanov's. Boris met Victor in 1967. As their association and friendship grew, Victor taught Boris "to understand minerals, tactics, and techniques in field work." In time, they became good friends and began traveling together visiting mines, quarries, and even opening new underground deposits that promised specimens. These travels together went on for over 20 years.

Like Fred Pough who taught me so much about mineral preparation, so did Victor, who taught Boris how to clean and prepare field collected specimens. Like another of my mentors, two-time Nobel Prize winner, Dr. Linus Pauling, who encouraged me to stay on my path in making discoveries related to diet and behavior, while encouraging me to take the knowledge I had gained from Fred Pough about minerals and trace elements and apply them to my interest in human behavior, Victor Stepanov would provide Boris the same encouragement to learn more about minerals, while quizzing him about a specimen's morphology and ontogeny.

During our respective childhoods, the two of us also used an empty carton box for a dozen eggs to store our "prized" field collected mineral specimens. While Boris hunted for "beautiful stones" in quarries around the suburbs of Moscow as a child, I did much the same thing collecting specimens chipped from exposed Manhattan schists in Manhattan with a carpenter's hammer, while Fred Pough urged me to discover what routes trucks would take to dump a load of rocks excavated of shists and gneiss in mid-town Manhattan during a boom in construction of 50- and 60-story office buildings that were going up on 6th Avenue rising ceaselessly into the skies on after another. Fred Pough also invited me to join him and colleagues on collecting trips to New Jersey, Connecticut, upstate New York, and Pennsylvania. Boris Kantor was taken much further distances by Victor to places such as Karelia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and the Urals. On these trips Boris would meet amateur and professional mineralogists and see private collections.

That Boris had visited the Urals to collect minerals, reminded me of my Russian-born grandfather. He earned his doctorate degree in engineering at the University of St. Petersburg. Somehow, he acquired a lifelong passion for min-