

Judith Lawson PhD



Judith always enjoyed physical geology at school and later her interest in geology was encouraged by her chemistry teacher. She studied at Bedford College in the University of London and graduated in 1959 with a degree in geology. She was then able to spend 3 years in the geology department of the University of Grenoble in the French Alps while studying for a London University PhD, on a NATO studentship available for study abroad. There she mapped an area in the Bochainne region, part of the subalpine chains and lying south of Grenoble. This included sediments of Jurassic and Cretaceous age, numerous fossils and good structures. She returned to London for a year to finish her PhD and then in 1962 moved north to Glasgow University, where she worked as an assistant lecturer for 3 years.

After a gap (marriage and children), Judith gave courses in the extramural department in Glasgow University and elsewhere, including Lockerbie and Falkirk, and also worked part-time in the Civil Engineering Department at what is now Caledonian University. The syllabus there had a section on building stones – a subject she had never thought much about. This led to an interest in the stone used in Glasgow and in particular in finding the quarries from which the stone was produced. The day release students working in Glasgow provided many samples of the facing stones being used. She produced a guide to the stone with walking trails around the city centre and was able to use this material in a chapter in the Buildings of Scotland series.

Judith then moved to a full time lectureship at what is now the University of the West of Scotland in Paisley, where both civil engineering and science students studied geology as part of their degrees. She retired in 1997.

Judith joined the Geological Society of Glasgow in 1962 and served as president from 1985 to 1988.