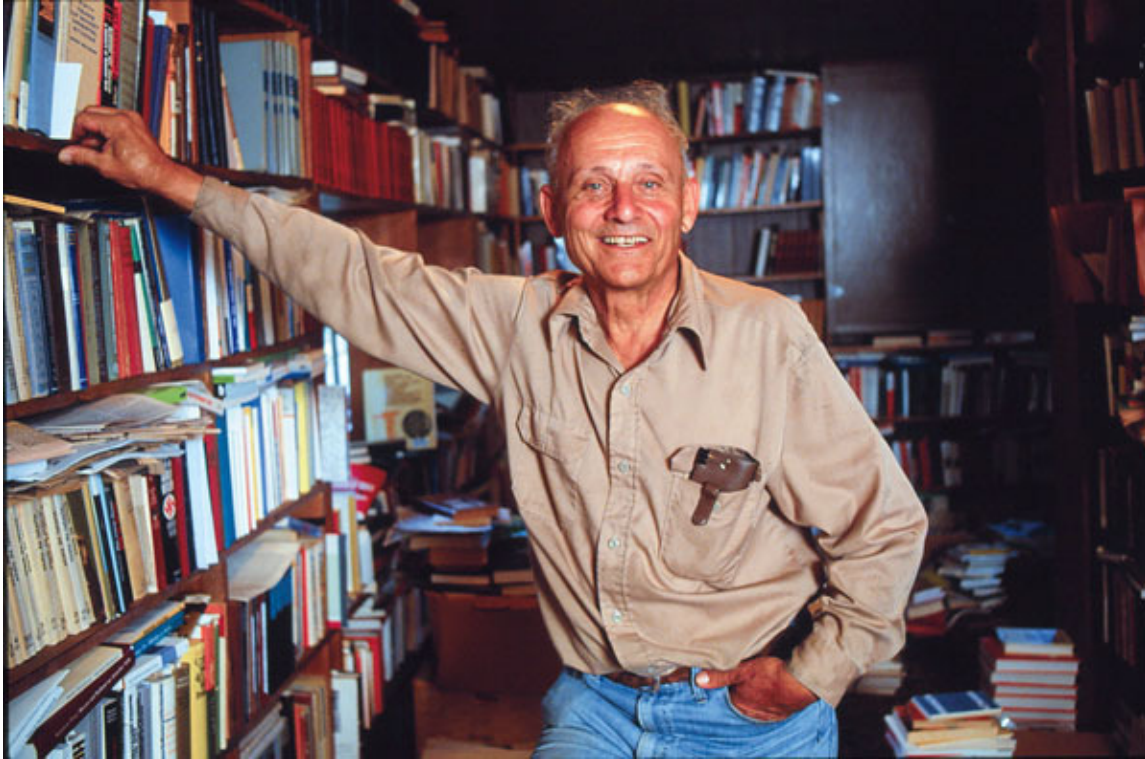


# Prof. Ladis K. D. Kristof



**Ladis K. D. Kristof, born in 1918 in Romania, of Polish and Armenian parents, died at the age of 91, in 2009.**

Owner of a 73-acre farm, he survived a tractor rollover at the age of 86 and still chopped wood and hunted deer and elk at the age of 90.

**Kristof was born to the aristocracy and grew up wealthy on a sprawling estate in Romania.**

**He learned seven languages and attended University in Poland.**

During World War II, Kristof was captured for spying and imprisoned by the Nazis. He escaped jail and eluded capture for the rest of the war, but at the war's end his family's estate was confiscated by the Red Army, eventually becoming absorbed into the Soviet Union and later into Ukraine. Having lost everything and considered suspect by the Communists, Kristof escaped by horseback and then by swimming across the Danube River on a dark night in 1948, in hope of reaching the West. He was detained on the Yugoslav side of the river, and sent to a concentration camp and later to an asbestos mine and logging camp. Marked for execution, Kristof once again escaped his captors, reaching Italy and eventually France. **He worked as a laborer in Paris until 1952, when he was finally able to emigrate to the United States.**

Arriving in New York, Kristof began his new life by purchasing a copy of the **New York Times**, the newspaper for which **his son, Nicholas D. Kristof, would later become a Pulitzer Prize winning columnist.** Upon his father's death, his son wrote a column in which he quoted his father's entry in Who's Who in America: "War, want and concentration camps, exile from home and homeland, these have made me hate *strife* among men, but they have not made me lose faith in the future of mankind.... I remain a rationalist and an optimist at a time when the

prophets of *doom* have the floor.... If man has been able to create the arts, the sciences and the material civilization we know in America, why should he be judged powerless to create justice, fraternity and peace? “

**To earn money while learning English (his eighth language), Kristof found a job at a logging camp in Oregon. He enrolled at Reed College, graduating in 1955 with a bachelor's degree in political science.**

**He became a U.S. citizen in 1958 and earned his Political Science PhD at the University of Chicago in 1969. He taught and conducted research at Temple University, Stanford University's Hoover Institution, the University of Santa Clara and the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada. A political geographer, he taught at Portland State University as recently as 2007.**

**Kristof specialized in Political Geography and Geopolitics, and published many articles on topics such as Frontiers, Boundaries and the History of Geopolitics. He also published substantially in the field of political science. Kristof wrote and edited books, monographs and articles, including Revolution and Politics in Russia, The Nature of Frontiers and Boundaries, and The Origins and Evolution of Geopolitics.**

**He frequently attended meetings of the International Geographical Congresses, where he was an active participant, and held visiting professorships in the U.S. and abroad. Kristof was a fifty-year member of the Association of American Geographers, and he was for a few years Member of ARA, organizing the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress of ARA at Portland State University, in Portland, OR, USA, in 1988, when he was Chairman. He participated in the Congresses at Los Angeles (1989), Bucharest (1991 – Chairman Dr. Dan Caccucci), in the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress at California State University, Northridge, CA, USA, (1992, Chairman Prof. Ileana Costea) and Reno (1995- Chairman Prof. Monica Grecu).**

Bibliography:

1 - Ladis K.D. Kristof (Necrology). 2010. AAG Newsletter 45(9): 22.

2 - [http://www.aag.org/cs/membership/tributes\\_memorials/gl/kristof\\_ladis\\_kd](http://www.aag.org/cs/membership/tributes_memorials/gl/kristof_ladis_kd).

Bibliography provided by Prof. Dr. Vidu Ruxandra, [r\\_vidu@yahoo.com](mailto:r_vidu@yahoo.com) 18-V-2014, from Association of the American Geographers.

**Prof. Dr. Monica Grecu ([grecu@unr.edu](mailto:grecu@unr.edu) On:Oct 10/23/14 6:43 P remembers him:**

Prof. Ladis Kristof was a very precious member of ARA. I appreciated him very much and I enjoyed discussing with him Historical, Political and Economical problems. I know what a prestigious, noble and dignified person he was, demonstrating these qualities each time he chaired a Session or was part of a panel. He was also appreciated by other Members of ARA, like Dr. Peter Gross and Prof. Charles Carlton, who knew him better academically. He has participated in the Congresses of: San Diego, Portland (1988) Los Angeles (1989), Bucharest (1991), Northridge (1992) and Reno (1995).

Editing and some translation in english: Dr. Carmen Sabau.

Reading this fascinating Biography, I was very impressed not only by his Education, publications, the 8 languages known, his perseverance in succeeding, but also by his adventurous life, during the Wars and Communism in Europe and his will to escape all the terrible situations! Indeed a life to admire and a character to follow. Dr. Carmen Sabau. 14-IV-2015.