

Bio: Professor Patrick MC KEEVER

Patrick James Mc Keever graduated in 1990 with a Ph.D. in Geology from the Queen's University of Belfast in Ireland. From 1990 to 1995 he was employed by the Department of Geology, University of Manchester, United Kingdom as Post-Doctoral Research Associate and from 1995 to 2012 he worked in the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland (GSNI) to encourage the wider understanding of geology and geological heritage; to assist communities and organisations in promoting sustainable economic development by use of their geological heritage.

He was instrumental in establishing the first Geoparks in 2000 and from 2004 was an advisor to the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences at UNESCO for the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) and has undertaken numerous expert missions on their behalf, evaluation, revalidation and advisory. He was instrumental in drafting the application guidelines and statutes for the GGN and was a member of the Global Geoparks Bureau.

Prof Mc Keever has been a scientific evaluator for IUCN on behalf of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. In 2006 he was invited to join the UK's Geoconservation Committee of the Geological Society and in 2007 he was invited to become a member of the WCPA (World Convention on Protected Areas). He was a member of the scientific board of the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP) on behalf of Ireland (2007-2012) and in October 2009 and October 2011 he was the official representative for Ireland to the Science Commission of the biannual UNESCO General Conference. In 2008 he was invited as a visiting professor to the Institute of Environment Research (Lestari) at the National University of Malaysia. Prof Mc Keever has been the field evaluator for 5 World Heritage applications. He is currently leading a review of geological nominations to the World Heritage list for IUCN.

In 2012, Prof Mc Keever joined UNESCO as the new Chief of Section for Earth Sciences and Geohazard Risk Reduction and as Secretary of the International Geoscience Programme. Among his jobs since joining UNESCO, Prof Mc Keever directed the formalising of the relationship between the Global Geoparks Network and UNESCO. This has happened through the creation of the new International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme and the creation of the UNESCO's first new site designation since the creation of the World Heritage Site label in 1972 by establishing of the designation "UNESCO Global Geopark" which happened in November 2015. Today there are 161 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 44 countries. Prof Mc Keever drafted the statutes and operational guidelines for UNESCO Global Geoparks and has given countless keynote talks and workshops (both regional and national) on UNESCO Global Geoparks and has advised countries on every continent regarding the creation of UNESCO Global Geoparks.

Prof Mc Keever retired from UNESCO in October 2018 in order to concentrate on establishing UNESCO Global Geoparks in areas of the world where there are none or few, and to encouraging deepening networking between UNESCO Global Geoparks through the Global Geoparks Network. He currently is the only Special Advisor to the Global Geoparks Network on Geopark Development. Additionally, for IUCN, he co-led a revision of the advice for countries seeking nominations to the World Heritage list for geological sites.