Rudolph W. Kuzmich ('49) holds the distinction of being the first person to graduate from Notre Dame with a degree in geology. He led an unusual academic career, beginning in June 1943, when he entered Notre Dame in the Navy V–12 and the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps. In 1945, the Navy ordered him to active duty with the Pacific Fleet, after which he returned to graduate from Notre Dame.

Rudy spent the first five years of his career with an oil exploration company and two years as an independent consulting geologist in Mt. Carmel, Illinois. In 1956, he founded his own company, R.K. Petroleum, currently headquartered in Midland, Texas. In recognition of his accomplishments, Rudy was given the Notre Dame science achievement award in 1965. He has five children.

Along with underwriting the acquisition of current basic materials for the study of the earth sciences, the Kuzmich Earth Sciences Endowed Library Fund is working hard to fill in retrospective gaps and necessary reference materials. As fields of research interests evolve and shift at Notre Dame, the Kuzmich Endowment responds as needed. Currently, it is providing critical support for the acquisition of new research materials in climatology, stratigraphy, and several other areas that cross the boundaries between the earth sciences and engineering.