

Graduate of the Royal Melbourne Technical College, the University of Melbourne (B.Sc.), the University of Toronto (M.A.Sc.) and the University of Illinois (Ph.D.) Served as Associate Professor and Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Waterloo (1960-1977), visiting Professor at University of Habana, (Cuba) and is currently Adjunct Professor of Earth Sciences at the University of Waterloo. From 1977-1990 served as Chief, Engineering Geology Section, Ontario Geological Survey.

Awards

Thomas Roy Award, Canadian Geotechnical Society, 1996

Hans Cloos Medal of the I.A.E.G., 1998

E.B. Burwell Jr. Memorial Award, Association of Engineering Geology, U.S.A., 1999

Special Achievement Award, Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada, 2003

Robert F. Legget Medal, Canadian Geotechnical Society, 2006

Fellow

Geological Society of London

History of Earth Sciences Society

Member

Professional Engineers, Ontario

Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada

Sigma Xi

Canadian Geotechnical Society

Tunnelling Association of Canada

Served as Vice President, North America, I.A.E.G., 1982-1986

Elected President, I.A.E.G. 1986-1990

Apart from the achievements of the technical meetings and some of the great technical presentations, I think the greatest memories I have of the time I spent as president of the IAEG are of the longlasting friendships that were established. In particular, I remember Michael Langer, who I first met when he visited me in Canada in the early 1970s, and Ricardo Oliveira, Paul Marinos, Louis Primel and Sijing Wang. Also, Valentina Shibakova who, when I visited the USSR, accompanied me from Moscow to Kazakhstan, where I spoke at a meeting at Alma Ata; on our return to Moscow we arrived just a few hours after the huge explosion at Chernobyl.

I was the first president of the IAEG from North America and enjoyed the support of both the United States and the Canadian national groups of the IAEG. In my final years as president, I made many memorable visits to meetings sponsored by national groups in Beijing (China) in 1987, Athens (Greece) in 1988, Washington DC (USA) in 1989 and Amsterdam (The Netherlands) in 1990.

In 1986, there were 4,600 individual members of the IAEG and 50 national groups, which by 1990 had increased to 55 national groups. Regretfully, not all national groups were able to be represented at the annual meetings, no doubt due to the high cost of international travel.

After the meeting in Buenos Aires (Argentina) in 1986, a meeting was held in Beijing in 1987, the first formal meeting to be held in China. It was organised by Sijing Wang and concerned, "Engineering geology in mountainous areas". The meeting concluded with a cruise down the Yangtse River from Chungking, stopping at several major landslide locations and at the location of a proposed new major dam site on the Yangtse River.

In 1988, the annual meeting was held in Athens, organised by Paul Marinos, and concerned the study and protection of ancient works, monuments and historical sites, which was a really new approach for the IAEG. The field trips were indeed memorable, especially to the monastic state of Mount Athos where delegates met with the monks and had a meal in one of the monasteries. This symposium was followed a few days later by a meeting in Tbilisi, USSR, organised and chaired by Professor Buachidze which was also a very memorable occasion in the life of the IAEG. The theme Engineering Geology of the Shelf and Continental Slope of Seas and Oceans was a new topic and was followed by a most interesting field trip to the Black Sea to view a programme on shoreline restoration. That year we lost our treasurer, André Peter, who resigned from professional practice and moved to live in the Principality of Andorra.

In 1989, the IAEG council and general assembly met in Washington DC (USA) in conjunction with the 28th International Geological Congress. A highlight of this meeting was the first presentation of the Hans Cloos Medal to David Varnes of Colorado (USA).

This occasion in Washington also saw the publication of the IAEG book on "Engineering geology of the earth", created and developed by three enthusiastic members of the IAEG, WR Dearman, EM Sergeev and V Shibakova.

At this same meeting in Washington, there was much discussion of the desirability of co-ordinating the programmes of the IAEG with those of the International Society of Soil Mechanics and Foundation Engineering (ISSMFE) and the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), especially with respect to studies of natural hazards,

but very little seemed to be achieved. I might note that such co-ordinating efforts were attempted between the three societies in Canada, also with very little effect.

In early 1990, I was able to meet for discussion with various local groups in South Africa in Cape Town, Durban and Pretoria before attending a conference in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. I believe these groups in Africa appreciated the contact.

In 1990, the IAEG met in Amsterdam and a major item of business by the Council was the discussion and acceptance of the revision of the IAEG statutes. These statutes, which guide and direct the everyday activities of the Association, are really the heart and soul of the Association. The new statutes were ultimately confirmed in Kyoto (Japan) in 1992 under Ricardo Oliveira to whom I passed on the presidency of the IAEG at the Amsterdam meeting.

Owen White