PERRY L. EHLIG (1927-1999)

Robert J. Stull

Perry Ehlig, Professor Emeritus of Geology at California State University at Los Angeles, died suddenly on December 26, 1999. He is survived by his wife, Marilyn, and five children, one of whom followed in her father's footsteps and became an engineering geologist, Kathleen Riedell.

Perry completed his undergraduate and graduate studies at UCLA receiving his Ph.D. in 1958. He began his Cal State Los Angeles career in 1956, rapidly rising through the academic ranks as assistant to the vice president for academic affairs and acting dean for instructional affairs.

Perry was known for his encyclopedic knowledge of the geologic sciences. He taught advanced courses in structural geology, engineering geology, field geology, and petrology. He taught the Department's summer field course many times and established himself as an extremely charismatic and devoted professor.

Professor Ehlig was extremely active in geologic research and professional consulting. He was a registered geologist and certified engineering geologist in California. He was well known for his work on the San Andreas Fault and the basement rocks of the San Gabriel Mountains, Mojave Desert, and the Salton Trough. His work in these areas played an important role in our understanding of the plate tectonic history of Southern California, and his results were published in numerous professional journals.

Perry had an intense interest in engineering geology. His work on the Portuguese Bend Landslide for the City of Rancho Palos Verdes began in 1956 and probably stands as the longest continuous study of an active landslide by a geologist on Earth. His work for the city was done on a volunteer basis.

In 1979 Perry wrote a mitigation report on the active 600-acre Abalone Cove Landslide. After the Beverly Act became law in 1981, Perry's report became the first GHAD (Geologic Hazard Abatement District) in California. He authored the Klondike Canyon Landslide GHAD. In appreciation of his dedication, after his death, the City of Rancho Palos Verdes erected a monument in his honor.

Professor Ehlig retired from Cal State in L.A. in 1992. The Perry Ehlig Scholarship was established at that time to honor Perry and carry on his personal tradition of paying the tuition for all students attending the summer field geology course. He continued to advise graduate students and teach courses on a volunteer basis, into his forty-fourth year of service to Cal State L.A., while also being extremely active in his research on the geology of Southern California and the Portuguese Bend Landslide.