

Memorial to Burton Hampton Marliave 1917-1991

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Burton H. Marliave, prominent California engineering geologist, died of cancer on February 4, 1991.

Burt was the first president of the Association of Engineering Geologists (AEG). During 1962-1963 AEG dropped the state's name from "California Association of Engineering Geologists" (CAEG) and it became an organization without geographic limits (CAEG was founded in 1957). On January 12, 1963, the Board of Directors of AEG met for the first time at Burt's home in Walnut Creek, California, and thus began a year of highly significant professional progress for the new organization.

In April 1963, the first bill to register engineering geologists in California was introduced in the State Senate, breaking ground for the registration act that finally passed the legislature and became law five years later. Furthermore, creation of a *Bulletin of Engineering Geology* was first approved during Burt's tenure as president. This journal has continued to date as the *Bulletin of the Association of Engineering Geologists*, and is a preeminent publication in its field. Fittingly, in accordance with AEG's expanded geographic limits, the first section outside California, the State of Washington Section, joined the Association during Burt's term, sending John Fryberger as their representative to the Board of Directors meeting in August 1963. AEG has since added sections throughout this country and in Canada, the United Kingdom, and South Africa as well.

Prior to his presidency of the Association as a whole, Burt Marliave was chairman of the San Francisco Section in 1959. The next year he and Ray Treasher organized the third annual meeting of CAEG, which was held on the campus of the University of California, Berkeley.

Burt was the youngest of a father-sons family of three outstanding California engineering geologists. Chester, his father, who was also a registered civil engineer, was a pioneer in the field of engineering geology. Elmer, Burt's older brother, served for many years as the chief engineering geologist of the California Department of Water Resources, followed by eleven years as a consultant before his death in 1967. Elmer, known as "Marley," was one of the founding members of the California Association of Engineering Geologists.

Burt Marliave graduated in 1939 from the College of Engineering and Mining, University of California, Berkeley, with a degree in geology. He went right to work with the U.S. Corps of Engineers, but took time off the next June to marry Doris Lucille Dodge, after her own graduation from Berkeley. Burt and Doris celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1990. They had five children, three living in the San Francisco Bay area, and eight grandchildren.

Burt, an army ROTC graduate, worked for the U.S. Bureau of Mines out of Salt Lake City for over a year before being called into active military duty with the Corps of Engineers in 1941. His military responsibilities took him to Africa and Italy during World War II, during which time he served as lieutenant, then captain.

After the war, Burt considered going into ranching. However, to its great benefit, engineering geology won out, and Burt launched into a career in the field in which he was to be highly



successful. He specialized in the engineering geology of water-related structures, including dam sites, aqueducts, pumping plants, and tunnels, but he also dealt with landslide and ground-water problems. Burt's first job after the war was with the Pacific Gas and Electric Company on dams on the Feather River in the Sierra Nevada.

Beginning in 1948, Burt worked with his father, Chester, for ten years, first as an assistant and then as a partner. During that time he did the engineering geology studies of numerous dam sites and dams under construction in the Coast Ranges of California, including Austrian, Anderson, Briones, and Nacimiento dams, and in the Sierra Nevada he worked on Railroad Flat, Comanche, and Donnels dam sites, among others.

After his father's death, Burt continued as a consultant on his own. One of his principal clients was the East Bay Municipal Utility District, California. Don Paff, who was a young engineer with the organization at that time, pays high professional tribute to Burt Marliave. Don relates that Burt was very active and thoroughly respected in his field, with a great breadth of experience. Don further speaks appreciatively of Burt's willingness and ability to communicate practical concepts in his field to young engineers, and characterizes Burt as an educator, professional colleague, and friend. Don Paff is presently Chief of Operations of the Central Valley Project of California for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

Burt's clients during his career included a great many public agencies as well as a variety of private firms. Supplementing his major water-related studies, he did site studies for various campuses of the University of California, including UC Santa Cruz and the UC Medical Center in San Francisco. Most of his work was in California, but he investigated Round Butte and Pelton dam sites in Oregon for Portland General Electric, and he studied geologic conditions pertaining to dams and tunnels on the Guri project in Venezuela.

Burt wrote many reports as a result of his engineering geologic investigations, but there is no record of his preparing any of them for publication—he was evidently just too busy.

Burt's honest evenhandedness resulted in his being chosen in recent years to serve as an arbitrator on complex cases involving engineering geology for the American Arbitration Association. He served on numerous consulting boards in his field and gave legal testimony as necessary.

A review of Burt's life would not be complete without describing his ability at contract bridge. He was a life member of the American Contract Bridge League, and he became a Life Master in 1960. The next year he took first place with a partner in the Men's Pairs Western Regional Championships. As would be expected, friends greatly enjoyed playing informal bridge with Burt and his wife, Doris, who is also very capable at the game.

Burt Marliave was a real outdoorsman. In addition to his geologic work at dam sites and dams under construction, he loved fishing and backpacking in the Sierra Nevada. As recently as the summer of 1989 Burt and Chuck De Kay, a friend since grade-school days, backpacked through the high country in Yosemite National Park.

Burt and Doris owned property in the Sierras above Lake Tahoe, and a cabin was under way on their land at the time of Burt's death. Of course Burt had laid out the water supply system, and the foundation was in place. Even back at his suburban home in the San Francisco Bay area, Burt couldn't stay indoors, and he enjoyed playing tennis until his last months.

Burt's family is taking steps to officially assign the name "Mount Marliave" to an unnamed granitic peak on the Marliave property in the Sierra Nevada, not far from the community of Soda Springs. Timing of the naming, proposal to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, a division of the U.S. Geological Survey, is in accordance with the Board's policy that names are not considered until at least one year after the death of the person whose name is proposed.

Mount Marliave would of course be a memorial to Burt's father, Chester, and his brother Elmer as well as to Burton Marliave. We can think of no better memorial to Burt and this family

of outstanding engineering geologists than a granitic mountain in the Sierra Nevada bearing the Marliave name.

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