

MIKE SCULLIN (1932-1995)

J. David Rogers



Chapter 70 in 1964. These "modern codes" were the first that actually required qualified professionals to supervise the design and implementation of grading and excavation activities for hillside development. When Orange County adopted their version of the modern grading code in 1963 they hired Mike as the County's first geologist, working with the Department of Building and Safety. Mike's practical bent and engineering background endeared him to soils engineers, geologists, and contractors (cat skinned) alike. His article for The American Society of Civil Engineers titled *Hillside Urban Development Under Government Agency Control* received ASCE's Daniel W. Mead Award in 1964. This effort was followed by his classic article titled *History, Development, and Administration of Excavation and Grading Codes* which appeared in Lung and Proctor's *Engineering Geology in Southern California* volume at AEG's 9th annual meeting at Anaheim in October 1966.

In 1968 Mike left Orange County to work in the private sector, working for Geolabs, Leighton & Associates, and Slosson & Associates, before becoming a self employed consultant in 1974. In 1983 he joined RSA Associates as a Vice President, and concluded his career as Chief Geologist of Rogers/Pacific between 1990-95.

In 1978 he began pursuing his master's degree in management at Redlands University, choosing development of grading and excavation codes as his thesis topic. This resulted in the publication of his classic text *Excavation and Grading Code Administration, Inspection, and Enforcement* by Prentice-Hall in 1983, which was subsequently reprinted by ICBO in 1991 and 1994. In 1985 Mike began teaching short courses for ICBO and the Association of Bay Area Governments, which allowed him to have an enormous impact on grading inspectors across the western United States. He suffered a near-fatal heart attack in 1987, and survived triple bypass surgery in 1993. In the spring of 1994 he fulfilled a life-long dream by visiting his family's roots in Ireland with two of his three sons. In November 1994 he received the Distinguished Practice Award of GSA's Engineering Geology Division. Two weeks later he received a heart transplant in San Francisco. In March 1995 he suffered a debilitating stroke and he died of complications associated with rejection of the heart transplant in early June 1995, at age 63.

Mike Scullin was born in 1932 in Danville, Illinois, where his father worked for the State Highway Department, but died unexpectedly when Mike was just 5 years old. He and his older brother were raised by an uncle, then in a Catholic orphanage. After attending Southern Illinois University for two years on a football scholarship he enlisted in the Navy Seabees during the Korean War. After his Navy service in Goose Bay, Labrador, he enrolled in civil engineering at Arizona State University on the GI Bill. After taking a course in engineering geology he decided to change his major to geology, and spent the following summer mapping in Wyoming under the tutelage of famed USGS geologist J. David Love. Upon graduation in 1958 he took a job with Associated Stratigraphic Services in Glendale, CA and got married. The following year (1959) he landed a position with the Glendale City Engineers Office as a grading inspector. Shortly afterward he joined the California Association of Engineering Geologists. His professional career was favorably influenced by James L. Slosson, to whom he endeared himself one day when some contractors physically restrained Slosson when he confronted them about burying erect trees in a fill and Mike came to his rescue.

In 1960 Mike joined AEG's Building Codes Committee, which developed the wording for the so-called "modern" grading ordinances that were subsequently adopted by the Cities of Los Angeles and Glendale in 1963 and the International Conference of Building Officials as Appendix