



Richard W. Galster

(1930-2011)

Richard W. (“Dick”) Galster, AEG Honorary Member and Past President (1983) died on April 3, 2011. Dick had a distinguished 61-year career in engineering geology as a practitioner, a leader, and an author of numerous practical publications. A native of Seattle, he earned B.S. and M.S. degrees in geology from the University of Washington. In this and later associations, Dick was a pupil and close associate of Prof. Howard A. Coombs, widely recognized as the pioneer Engineering Geologist of the Pacific Northwest (PNW). In 1955, after serving as an infantryman in the U.S. Army, and as a Geologist with one of the Columbia River Power & Irrigation Districts, he joined the Seattle District, Corps of Engineers; as staff geologist. Later, as supervisory geologist he participated in engineering geological investigations, the design and construction of Howard

Hanson, Lower Monumental, and Wynochee Dams in Washington, and Libby Dam in Montana.

In 1973, Dick became District Geologist and Chief of the Seattle District Geology Section, a position he held until his retirement from government service in 1985. Rising to his concern for participation in professional society matters, Dick chaired AEG's 11th Annual Meeting (Seattle, 1968). As a result of his supervision of numerous site investigations, Galster proposed *A System of Engineering Geology Mapping Symbols* (*Bull. AEG*, v. 14, 1977, no. 1, p. 39-47), which was the first attempt to stack stratigraphic notation to ground-surface map symbols; long overdue at the time. During this period he supervised seismic safety evaluations for 18 major dams in Washington, Oregon, Montana, California, and Idaho; provided construction advice for completion of the Libby project, and directed geological investigations, excavation plans, and specifications for Libby Reregulation Dam. As a result of the need for seismic withstand design of Libby Dam, Dick mastered and became a recognized expert in Pacific Northwest seismicity, for Maximum Credible Event (MCE) determination.

From 1981 to 1985 Dick represented the Corps of Engineers on the U S Nuclear Regulatory Commission advisory group for a then Hanford, Washington candidate site ("basalt" _ proposed for the national high-level nuclear waste repository (later selected at Yucca Mountain, Nevada). He was awarded the Department of the Army Decoration for Meritorious Civilian Service in 1985. After leaving government service in 1985 he was a consultant to the U S Nuclear Regulatory Commission Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analysis-Southwest Research Institute, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, U S Bureau of Reclamation, U S Army Corps of Engineers, and numerous engineering firms. He was recruited by Prof. Bob Holtz, as an adjunct faculty member in the Civil

Engineering Department at the University of Washington, where he taught a yearly graduate level class in engineering geology. Although retired from geologic consulting, in 2006 Dick's penchant for public service again arose. He volunteered and was selected for a position on the Washington State Geologist Licensing Board. He served a four-year term and was chair of the board in 2009.

In 1993 Dick was recognized by the Geological Society of America's Engineering Geology Division for his editorship on *Engineering Geology in Washington* (Bulletin 78, Washington Division of Geology and Earth Sciences, 1989). He received the Burwell Award for this mammoth, two-volume, 1234-page publication containing 13 chapters with 127 papers by over 100 authors. Dick was directly involved in four chapters and was author or coauthor of 21 of the papers. *Engineering Geology in Washington* is clearly a publication of distinction, worldwide, and has generally advanced the knowledge base of the Principles and Practice of Engineering Geology. Immediately after putting the finishing touches on the Engineering Geology in Washington volume, Dick teamed with Bill Laprade to write the *Geology of Seattle, Washington, USA*, published as part of AEG's *Cities of the World* series in 1991. Dick further deserves special thanks from AEG for compiling the Association's *History* for its first 25 years, 1957 to 1982.

Dick was president of the Association of Engineering Geologists (1982 – 1983), a Fellow of the Geological Society of America, and Chairman (in 1978) of its Engineering Geology Division. He received AEG's Clair P. Holdredge Award in 1991 (recognition of the "Washington" volumes) and the Association's Floyd T. Johnson Service Award in 1993. Dick was named an Honorary Member of AEG in 1998. In 1995 he received the GSA Engineering Geology Division's Distinguished Practice Award.

By his long, dedicated leadership in engineering geology, both in the Geological Society of America and the Association of Engineering Geologists; his practice with the Corps of Engineering; and later as a consultant; and his publications, Richard W. Galster set an outstanding example of professional excellence in engineering geology.

Dick was the ultimate professional, including remembrances of the nature of geologic contacts at specific project locations, but he was a humble man, ever able to see the light side of a situation. As his hometown obituary most aptly expressed, “The science of his profession informed his spirituality; he believed in the relative insignificance of humankind and was comforted by this. His church was a high mountain meadow more than any cathedral.”