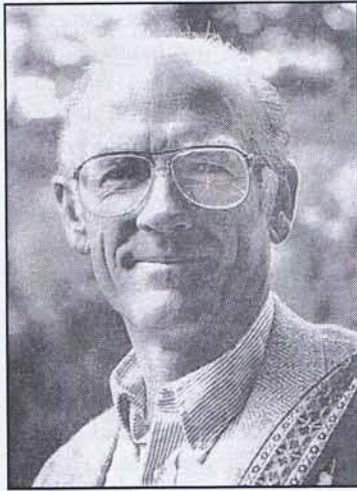


## MARTIN LINDY STOUT (1934-1994)

*Dottie Stout\**



Martin Lindy Stout was a true Southern California product, born in North Hollywood to his parents Seth and Ethel. They had moved to California from Pennsylvania in 1929, and the memory of Lindbergh's solo crossing of the Atlantic was in the forefront of their minds on February 11, 1934. He and his older sister grew up in the pastoral San Fernando Valley, where his horticultural parents had a fruit stand and devel-

oped giant pansies. Less than a mile to the east, across Big Tujunga Wash, was a rival fruit stand owned by a friend, Walter Knott, who shared his developing boysenberry plants. In March of 1938, a spectacular flood down big Tujunga Wash eroded through the berry patch of Mr. Knott, which led to his move to Buena Park and the eventual Knott's Berry Farm.

Martin's parents also gave up on the alluvium. In 1946 at the age of 12, the family moved to Big Bear Lake. He attended a school of 17 students, but graduated Class President and at the top of his class, and winning MVP for his basketball team.

In 1951, Martin went to Occidental College on a scholarship and met the Chair of the Geology Department, Joe Birman, a very jovial and likeable person. His first long field trip was to Owens and Death Valley with Mark Meier and Birman, and he came back suitably awed. After graduating in 1955, he entered the graduate program at the University of Washington.

Martin's introduction into engineering geology evolved from two professors who were involved with consulting, Howard Coombs and J. Hoover Mackin. A large part of his dissertation was mapping the central cascades which was published in the GSA Bulletin, v. 75, p. 317-334.

After graduation he spent a tour of duty with the Army Corps of Engineers at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia, where he learned, among other things, how to produce great firewood from a standing tree using plastic explosives.

He joined the Department of Geological Sciences at California State University at Los Angeles in 1960, retiring in 1990, but continuing to teach until 1994. Fellow professor Perry Ehlig was consulting outside of academia, and asked Martin to work on a problem in the Conejo Volcanics near Thousand Oaks. He reveled in the job, and word got out that this "hotshot academic geologist could actually map." He teamed with the late Doug Brown of Moore & Taber, and they solved both engineering and geologic problems. In the 34 years of his professional activity he worked on over 800 projects serving as expert witness for individuals, attorneys, corporations, and Cal Trans.

His research interests were reflected in his publications on slope stability in the Holocene of Southern California, especially in the San Bernardino Mountains and the Blackhawk Landslide. He was the first to locally use

radiocarbon-dating techniques to the timing of major landslides.

He spent 1966-67 in Norway and Iceland on a NSF Science Faculty Fellowship studying "quick clay" failures. And in 1970-71 he was awarded a National Research Advisory Senior Research Fellowship by the New Zealand government to study toward lessening the damage caused by landslides and erosion. He initiated an out-reach program for school teachers called "Let's Go Geologizing!" And he went to GSA's "Dottie Trips" to China, Europe, Britain, Russia, Africa, and Indonesia.

Spring 1985 was a special year. Martin had asked his close friend Dottie Steller to give a talk to the Geology Department Speaker's Bureau at Cal State. He introduced Dottie by saying, "This is the most important introduction I have made in my years at Cal State. I would like to introduce you to my fiancée!" Of course he never shared that possibility with Dottie. She recalled how she managed to get through her talk, hyperventilating, and more.

In addition to his love of teaching, Martin was professionally active including chair of the Membership Committee of GSA, and was Secretary and Chair of the Cordilleran Section of GSA. He was President of the Branner Club; was a founder and Faculty Advisor of a Student chapter of AEG (and brought many students to the local AEG meetings); was Program Chairman for the 1992 AEG Annual Meeting in Long Beach; was awarded Honorary Membership in AEG. Martin was active in the South Coast Geological Society, and they named a 672-page Field Trip Book, the "Mojave Desert," in honor of him. He was a member of the California State Registration Exam committee, formulating exams for geologists, engineering geologists, and geophysicists. After his passing, AEG created a memorial scholarship fund in his honor.

A comment from former student Eldon Gath: "The right or wrong was not as important as the number of possibilities that would fit the observations, usually from 1 to 2 miles. Then with your head full of ideas and hypotheses, you set out, methodically and organized in an approach to start eliminating possibilities. Finally, using details and information from inaccessible areas, the picture was drawn. It dawned on me that Martin had forced me to self-educate. I have since concluded that training students to self-educate should be a major objective of any college education – and hence my high regard for him as an educator."

A memorial by fellow faculty colleague Robert Stull ends: "All of Martin's qualities were combined with infectious good humor and a true love of people." On September 23, 1994 Martin succumbed to a 17-year battle against cancer, during which he taught those around him about life itself. His memorial service was held in the garden that he so carefully nurtured and that was a metaphor for his life. One of the most moving statements came from a surprise guest, a young window washer: "I didn't know Martin very long – only one day. But during that day I came to love him. He showed appreciation for the work I do."

Condensed from : 1994 "Dedication to Martin Lindy Stout" in the book "Mojave Desert," Martin Stout Volume: South Coast Geological Society, Santa Ana, CA Annual Field Trip Guidebook No. 22, 672 p.