

In Memoriam



Richard “Dick” Norman White

December 21, 1933 – October 3, 2009

**James A. Friend Family Distinguished Professor of
Engineering Emeritus
School of Civil and Environmental Engineering,
Cornell University**

Memorial Gathering
DeFrees Family Auditorium, B14 Hollister Hall
May 1, 2010, 3:00 p.m.

John Abel, BCE '63 <i>Former student, Faculty colleague and Master of Ceremonies</i>	Opening Remarks and Recollections
Chuck Salmon (<i>in absentia</i>) <i>Grad School Officemate, UW-Madison</i>	Recollections read by John Abel
Robert Sexsmith <i>Former faculty colleague and Co-author, Structural Engineering</i>	Recollections
Donald Berth <i>College colleague and Long-time friend</i>	Recollections
Christopher Conley, MS '80, PhD '83 <i>Former student and Former faculty colleague</i>	Recollections
David Darwin, BS '67, MS '68 <i>Former student and Past President of ACI</i>	Tribute
Floor open for remarks by others <i>All welcome</i>	Remembrances
Barbara Shaffer, David White <i>Daughter and Son</i>	Appreciation from Dick's family
John Abel	Closing Remarks

All welcome to attend a **Reception** following this gathering to be held at the
Richard N. White Instructional Laboratory
inside the Bovay Laboratory Complex of CEE
Basement of Thurston Hall (just east of Hollister Hall)

Please enjoy the exhibition of photographs by Dick White displayed on the side walls of the DeFrees Family Auditorium before, during and after the memorial gathering.
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Richard “Dick” N. White

Dick died October 3, 2009 at the age of 75. He was born December 21, 1933 in Chetek, Wisconsin and grew up on several different dairy farms in Wisconsin. He and his wife, Margaret “Marge” C. Howell, were married in December 1957.

Dick received his civil engineering education at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, earning a B.S. in 1956 and an M.S. in 1957. He then was called to 6-months of active duty in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, after which he returned to Madison to work as a structural designer for a firm of consulting engineers. He continued this work part time when he re-enrolled at UW-Madison for his Ph.D. in structures, awarded in 1961. While still a graduate student, he began to develop his famously effective teaching skills by serving as an Instructor with full responsibility for several undergraduate courses.

He joined the CEE faculty in 1961 and rapidly developed a versatile research program to complement his teaching of undergraduate and graduate courses, some of which he initiated. Although his research interests spanned all the traditional areas of structural engineering – experimental, analytical and computer approaches to concrete, steel and timber structures – he held a special love for topics in concrete and for structural model studies. In support of the last, he led the creation and use of a structural models lab for both instruction and research that was one of the finest in the nation. Among his many publications, he was the senior author (with Peter Gergely and Robert Sexsmith) of a remarkably successful set of textbooks, *Structural Engineering*, a three-volume series that integrated aspects of mechanics, analysis, behavior, materials and design – and also disseminated widely the essence of the Cornell CEE undergraduate curriculum in structures.

Among his numerous appointments and positions at Cornell, he most notably served as Director of the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering (1978-84). Among his proudest accomplishments as Director was the fundraising, planning, construction and dedication for a 5,000-sq.ft. addition to Hollister Hall to house the Joseph H. DeFrees Hydraulics Laboratory. He served the College as Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs (1987-90), and he was named the James A. Friend Family Distinguished Professor of Engineering in 1988. Dick retired from Cornell in 1999 but remained active in the School until illness overtook him in 2005. Thanks to the financial support of alumni and friends, the Richard N. White Instructional Laboratory was dedicated in 2004 within the newly refurbished Bovay Laboratory Complex of CEE.

During the course of his career, he received two teaching awards from Cornell’s College of Engineering (1965 and 1996), three “Professor of the Year” honors from Chi Epsilon (1972, 1987 and 1996), the University of Wisconsin Distinguished Service Citation (1993), and the Collingwood Prize of the

American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) in 1967. He was elected to National Academy of Engineering in 1992 and was also named an Honorary Member of the ASCE in 2001.

An American Concrete Institute (ACI) member since the late 1950s, Dick was elected ACI Vice President in 1995, served as ACI President from 1997 to 1998, and was Chair of the Standards Board from 2002 to 2005. He was a member of the Technical Activities Committee for 8 years and served as its Chair from 1991 to 1994. He also served a 3-year term on the ACI Board of Direction. White was a member of numerous ACI committees; and he was the first Chair of ACI Committees 335: Composite and Hybrid Structures, and 444: Experimental Analysis for Concrete Structures. White received the ACI Joe W. Kelly Award in 1992 and was the co-recipient of the ACI Wason Medal for Most Meritorious Paper and the ACI Structural Research Award in 1993 and 1994, respectively. He was named an ACI Fellow in 1974, was elevated to ACI Honorary Membership in 2006, and was recognized as a Fifty-year ACI Member in 2009.

During his sabbatical leaves from Cornell, he was a staff associate at Gulf General Atomic (1967-1968) and a visiting professor at the University of California at Berkeley (1974-75), the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez (1982), Southwestern Jiaotong University in China (1982) and Durham University in England (1990).

Throughout his 39 years at Cornell, Dick also maintained a part-time consulting practice for dozens of clients, including leading companies, national laboratories, government agencies, publishers and universities. This consulting involved a diverse mix of structural, research, evaluative and editorial work.

Through his mentoring of many international graduate students and his duties as ACI President, he was able to travel to a great many places in the world, such as the Middle East and Latin America. He also lectured in many places, including an extended stint in China in the early 1980s that included Beijing, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Wuhan, Xian, and Chendu. He always carried his favorite camera, recording his trips, the scenery, the people, the foods, and life wherever he was.

Photography was a major pastime for Dick. He enjoyed taking pictures of people, birds, animals, flowers, and all the things around him. He later entered many photographic exhibitions, and had numerous one-man shows of his various works, both locally in Ithaca and a major show in eastern Massachusetts. He also recorded the growing years of his daughter, Barbara, and son, David.

Dick was very proud of his years at Cornell University and of the colleagues and students who were an integral part of his career and life. He enjoyed his many friends and neighbors through his Ithaca years, as well as his beloved schnauzers. He is survived by his wife, Margaret, one daughter and one son and their spouses, a sister, and several grandchildren, nieces and nephews.