IAG Newsletter

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Each IAG Newsletter includes several of the following topics:

- I. General information
- II. Reports of IAG symposia
- III. Reports by commissions, special commissions or study groups
- IV. Symposia announcements
- V. Book reviews
- VI. Fast bibliography

Obituary

Richard Henry Rapp (1937–2020)

Professor Richard H Rapp passed away on September 20, 2020, at the age of 83. Professor Rapp is a world renowned authority in the field of gravity modeling.

Richard Rapp was full professor at the Department of Geodetic Science at the Ohio State University (OSU) from 1971 till his retirement as Professor Emeritus in 1992. He contributed greatly to its fame as world center of geodesy. He got his B.S. from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and his M.S. from the Ohio State University, from where he also received his Ph.D. in 1964. In 1962, he joined the faculty of the Department of Geodetic Science. The focus of his research was global and regional modeling of the Earth's gravitational field from terrestrial and satellite data. Richard Rapp implemented advanced theoretical and numerical concepts to his modeling activities. His research culminated in a series of global high resolution gravity models based on the combination of terrestrial and satellite data. It found wide application in geodesy, solid Earth geophysics and oceanography. As a consequence of the success of his work, he was invited to various important advisory panels of NASA and the National Academy of Sciences and internationally. His reputation attracted a large number of international students and postdocs, many today in highly regarded geodetic positions. He was an excellent teacher and supervisor, clear in his messages and in the direction of his research but also

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open to scientific dispute. His work is documented in a large number of publications, many of them published jointly with his students and postdocs, and many of them are still quoted and used today. He served the science community in many ways, such a section and study group president of the International Association of Geodesy (IAG), geodesy section president of the American Geophysical Union (AGU) or as member of various advisory and publication boards.

Professor Rapp's research received wide recognition and acclaim. He received the Weikko and Karrina Heiskanen Award of the Department of Geodetic Science (OSU) in 1964, and was named Distinguished Scholar at OSU in 1986, fellow of AGU in 1979 and that of IAG in (1991); he received several NASA Group Achievement Awards, among others for his important support in the development of the Topex/Poseidon altimetry mission. In 1997, he was honored

with an honorary doctor of engineering degree of Technical University Munich.

For Richard Rapp, the guideline of his research was striving for a proven value in science and application. This made that he is not only a leading figure in geodetic science, but that his work is highly recognized as well in solid Earth geophysics and oceanography. The use of satellites has opened important new fields to geodesy; Richard Rapp is one of the pioneers of this development. Richard Rapp was a wonderful person, positive, interested and friendly. He will be greatly missed.

October 2020

Chris Jekeli and Reiner Rummel

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