

Obituary for Dr. Philip E. LaMoreaux

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It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of our Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Philip E. LaMoreaux, who died at home in Tuscaloosa, Alabama on June 23, 2008.

“Phil” LaMoreaux was born in Chardon, Ohio, May 12, 1920. After graduating from Denison University (B.A., 1943) and the University of Alabama (M.S., 1949), he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Science from Denison University (D.Sc., 1972).

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He began his career in hydrogeology with the US Geological Survey (USGS) in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, in 1943. From 1945 to 1958, he was District Geologist of the USGS’s Ground Water Office in Alabama.

In 1954, Phil LaMoreaux provided the Government of Thailand and US AID Bangkok with recommendations for organizing and training a ground-water staff and for expanding ground-water exploration and development in northeastern Thailand.

In 1958, he was appointed Division Hydrologist in charge of water resources programs in the 14- state mid-continent area, and a year later, became Chief of the Ground Water Branch of the USGS in Washington, DC. In that capacity he strengthened and improved project management procedures. Through his personal experience and academic training, Phil was acutely aware of the training needed in hydrogeology, and became a leader and active participant in early Ground Water Branch short courses.

In 1961, he was appointed Alabama State Geologist and Oil and Gas Supervisor. During his 15-year tenure as state geologist, the Alabama State Survey grew to become one of the leading state surveys in the United States, producing topographic, geologic, minerals, and water resources reports for all the countries in the state. From 1945 to 1983 he also served as adjunct professor in the Geology Department at the University of Alabama.

In 1959, the United Arab Republic (UAR) created the General Desert Development Authority (GDDA) and requested Phil LaMoreaux’ assistance through the USGS and U.S. State Department to design a program of ground-water investigations in the New Valley of the Western Desert of Egypt.

Dr. LaMoreaux was certified as a professional geologist in 14 states and nationally was a member of the American Institute of Professional Geologists, American Institute of

Hydrogeologists, American Association of Petroleum Geologists, and Geological Society of America (GSA). He was also a Senior Fellow of the Geological Societies of London and Thailand. He had worked as a hydrogeologist in 31 foreign countries and served as the United States delegate to the International Hydrogeological Map Commission of the International Union of Geophysics in Ireland, Greece, and France.

In 1976, Phil LaMoreaux established the consulting firm of P.E. LaMoreaux and Associates, Inc. (PELA), serving as President (1970–1987), Chairman of the Board (1987–1990), and Senior Hydrogeologist (1991–2008). In 1983, at the request of the University of Alabama, he accepted the position as Director of the Environmental Institute for Waste Management Studies (EIWMS) and continued in that position until 1989. He obtained finances and developed and managed the EIWMS, bringing together a “think tank” of leading scientists from ten major universities in the United States. This group produced a series of papers and guidelines that were used as a basis for environmental actions during the early part of the environmental movement in the USA.

In 1986, LaMoreaux was presented the Award for Distinguished Service in Hydrogeology by GSA. In 1990, he was the recipient of the Ian Campbell Award of the American Geological Institute (AGI), given in recognition of singular performance in and contribution to the profession of geology. A year earlier, he had been elected to the National Academy of Engineers. He was bestowed with the “Commanders Medal” of the US Corps of Engineers, the William B. Heroy Award of AGI, and a gold medal from the Russian Academy of Science. During 2006, he received the Pillars of West Alabama and the Governor of Alabama’s International Trade Excellence Award.

Phil and his wife, Bunnie, maintained a rather rigorous travel schedule to conferences around the world. They traveled by elephants in Thailand, camels in Egypt, four-wheel drive, airplane, and boat in America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. On one recent trip of 2,000 kilometers, Phil circumnavigated the Western Desert of Egypt, the hottest and driest place on earth, to examine a large ground-water project bringing artesian water to those living in this area.

Over the years, he has written over 150 technical reports and books. Two recent books include *Exodus: Myth, Legend, History* and *Famous Springs and Bottled Waters of the World*. He is also co-author of *Field Methods for Geologists and Hydrogeologists* and of *Environmental Hydrogeology*.

Nationally and internationally, Phil LaMoreaux contributed to the profession of geology through his involvement with major geological societies as president of AGI, American Association of State Geologists, and IAH, as well as chairman of the GSA’s Hydrogeology Division and American Geophysical Union’s Hydrology Division, and

the Commissions on Karst and on Mineral and Thermal Waters of IAH. He was also Chairman of the Environmental Awareness Committee of AGI and is included in the directories *American Men of Science*, *Who’s Who in the Southeast, USA*, and *Who’s Who in America*.

After retiring as State Geologist, he continued his professional career in 1982 as Editor-in-Chief of our international journal—then named *Environmental Geology and Water Sciences*. He took over this task from his scientist friend, Dr. Peter Flawn of the University of Texas, who originally recruited Dr. LaMoreaux for the editorship of the journal after tenure of 7 years as chief editor for this emerging publication. Peter had been one of the early promoters of the term “environmental geology” in the late sixties (Flawn, P.T., 1970: *Environmental Geology: What is the responsibility of the science?*, in Young, K. (ed.) *Environmental Geology*, Am. Geol. Inst., Washington).

As executive editor, Phil LaMoreaux since then has personally promoted the journal of *Environmental Geology* around the globe when he attended meetings and through correspondence. He also personally approached and invited a large number of eminent geoscientists worldwide to serve as editors for our journal.

He led the journal through many improvements. A great boost came with the launch of the online submissions that enhanced the ever growing journal. In his leadership in the publication of the journal, he was required to make many very difficult advisory decisions. He was very pleased about the upcoming change in the Journal’s title, the further broadening of the scope and the printing of the Journal in full color and was looking forward to its fruition.

In 1990, when Gunter and Phil were both acting as members of the International Hazardous Waste Commission of IAH, Gunter was invited by Phil and the late Wolfgang Engel (Head of the earth science division of Springer Verlag) to work as the European Editor of *Environmental Geology*. Since then Gunter and Phil have enjoyed a fruitful and close collaboration in sharing the task of editorship worldwide.

As a continuation of this relationship, Dr. James LaMoreaux will be stepping in to serve as Editor-in Chief in his father’s stead. “Jim” LaMoreaux has already served on the Editorial Board for 9 years and reviews articles for the Journal. In addition he is spearheading publication of two special issues. One of the issues has been published and the other one on environment and sustainability is in process along with a book from the same conference.

During his father’s illness, Jim LaMoreaux began acting as Editor-in Chief with his blessings and the concurrence of Springer. He has many of the same contacts as Phil LaMoreaux in addition to ones he has developed, and he has the drive to bring the aims and scope of the Journal to the next generation.

To his co-workers, Phil LaMoreaux will be remembered as a very sincere and knowledgeable colleague. For many of us he was a father figure and a very caring friend.

The editorial board and staff at Springer Verlag will certainly miss him and remember his friendliness, his good

humor, unceasing energy and intellectual wit. As Phil LaMoreaux' successors as Editors-in-Chief, Jim LaMoreaux and Gunter Dörhöfer will continue to work for the benefit of the Journal, acting in accordance with his ideas and remembering him as an ideal to follow.