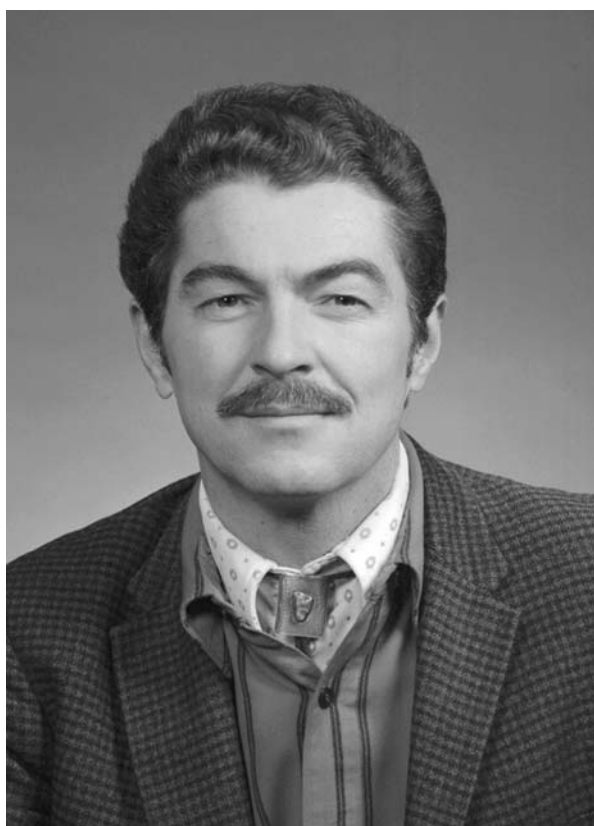


William I Rose, Professor

To Robert W. Decker 1927–2005

Published online: 14 January 2006
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Robert W. Decker, volcanologist and former IAVCEI president, died on June 11, 2005. Bob was born in Williamsport, PA. He received the B.Sc. degree from MIT in 1949, the M.Sc. in 1950, and went on to a D.Sc. from the Colorado

School of Mines in 1953, doing doctoral research on the Ruby Mountains of Nevada. He then served on the faculty at Dartmouth College from 1954 to 1979. He twice served as Chair of the Department of Earth Sciences at Dartmouth and was revered as a master lecturer. At Dartmouth, in the early 1960s, many students attended lectures of the best professors without taking the class formally. Bob filled the lecture hall at his “Rocks 1” with unenrolled walk-ins. He became Professor of Geophysics and helped make the Dartmouth Earth Sciences Department a place where talented people, who would otherwise have never thought of the idea, became committed natural scientists. A sabbatical leave to Indonesia in 1959–60 led to his interest in volcanology, and he subsequently undertook volcanological work in Iceland, Alaska, and the Cascades. Among the students he influenced were Dave Harlow, who later played an important role in the Pinatubo forecasting experience and Pall Einarsson (Columbia-Lamont) who helped Bob directly test the sea-floor spreading hypothesis by making geodetic surveys across the mid-Atlantic Ridge in Iceland. Bob believed in great field educational experiences and pushed many students and colleagues on the Dartmouth faculty to study volcanoes. Noteworthy among these was Richard Stoiber, a longtime colleague who shared his fervor and enthusiasm for science, and who was introduced to active volcano studies in Central America by Bob. For more than two decades, Decker, Stoiber, Robert C. Reynolds, John Lyons, and Andrew McNair were the faculty that made Dartmouth Earth Sciences an outstanding student-focused educational environment. This stellar faculty made quality teaching, student mentorship and research their top priority; they supported students above all. Bob was the most gracious and accessible of that group of superb mentors. From 1975–79, in his final years at Dartmouth, Bob served as IAVCEI president and his leadership helped the organization to grow and become broader.

In 1979, Bob left Dartmouth to join the USGS and serve as scientist in charge at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory from 1979 to 1984. Bob was an energetic and personable SIC. He was especially interested in geophysical

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monitoring techniques and pushed the development of electronic distance measurements and other techniques that helped HVO to better understand Kilauea and Mauna Loa. Bob's leadership in the skillful management of monitoring and public/media communications during the 1984 Mauna Loa eruption was full of quality and grace.

Bob moved to California in 1984 and used his professorial skills, sharpened in Rocks 1 lectures, in a new outreach effort. With his wife Barbara, he wrote books about science, especially volcanoes, for everyone. These books are full of outstanding photographs that demonstrate a considerable artistic ability that complements the writing. In all, the Deckers wrote 15 successful books about volcanoes and national parks, the latest being *Volcanoes in the National Parks* (www.doubledeckerpress.com).

Bob's proudest accomplishment was his leadership in the establishment of the Center for the Study of Active Vol-

canoes (CSAV) at the University of Hawaii Hilo in 1989 (<http://www.uhh.hawaii.edu/~csav/>). CSAV's mission is to provide training and information about monitoring volcanoes and mitigating volcanic hazards. This center has trained more than 100 volcanologists from all around the Ring of Fire. In his honor, there is now a Robert Decker Memorial Scholarship, which provides funding for CSAV students from developing countries (Center for the Study of Active Volcanoes University of Hawaii at Hilo 200 West Kawili Street Hilo, Hawaii 96720-4091).

We salute a great volcanological leader and generous friend who had an exemplary career that touched many and communicated broadly and beautifully.

Bill Rose

20 September 2005

photo by S. Edward Spaulding (January 1975), Dartmouth College Library