



Philip E. Moreaux

PHILIP E. LAMOREAUX, SR.

1920–2008

Elected in 1987

“For geological and geotechnical contributions to groundwater resource development and to hazardous waste disposal and management.”

BY JAMES K. MITCHELL

PHILIP ELMER LAMOREAUX, SR. of A. E. LaMoreaux and Associates, Inc., died at his home in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, on June 23, 2008, at the age of 88. He was a leading figure in the development of hydrogeology and environmental geology, two of the most dynamic subdisciplines of geology in the late twentieth century and an internationally recognized contributor to the field of hydrology of karst terrains.

Born in Chardon, Ohio, on May 12, 1920, Philip LaMoreaux received a B.A. from Denison University in 1943, an M.S. from the University of Alabama in 1949, and an Honorary Doctor of Science from Denison University in 1972. He was a registered professional geologist in 14 states.

Philip LaMoreaux's professional career included working in several federal and state agencies, academic institutions, and as a private consultant. After serving as a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, from 1943 to 1945, he was the district geologist in charge of the USGS Groundwater Office in Alabama from 1945 to 1957. He began teaching geology and hydrogeology at the University of Alabama as an adjunct professor in 1945 and continued in that position until his retirement from the university in 1985. During 1957 and 1958, Dr. LaMoreaux was division hydrologist in charge of water resource programs in the 14-state Mid-Continent Area of the USGS. From 1959 to 1961, he was chief of the USGS Groundwater Branch in Washington, D.C., where

his responsibilities included supervising all USGS groundwater activities in the United States and its possessions.

From May 1961 to August 1976, Dr. LaMoreaux was state geologist and oil and gas supervisor for Alabama, a period during which the state survey became one of the leading state geological agencies in the country; the agency's work covered geology, minerals, water, energy, and the environment. His consulting firm, LaMoreaux and Associates, Inc. (PELA), which was incorporated in 1975, carried out assignments in all of these areas internationally; he was president (1970–1987), chairman of the board (1987–1990), and then senior hydrogeologist of the company. Dr. LaMoreaux visited 33 countries in carrying out assignments as a representative of U.S.AID, World Bank, and FAO/United Nations, as well as a private consultant. He was especially proud of his successes in finding and developing groundwater resources in the arid Middle East.

Dr. LaMoreaux authored approximately 150 scientific and technical publications in his areas of expertise and held several editorial positions. In 1983, at the request of the president of the University of Alabama, he organized and directed the Environmental Institute for Waste Management Studies, which was established in response to environmental issues that came to the fore during the late 1960s and 1970s. This pioneering institute brought together 10 nationally recognized experts in a range of engineering and scientific disciplines to study and report on technical, social, and economic issues related to the safe management of wastes and the protection of the environment.

During his career, Philip LaMoreaux was a member of some 30 different professional and scientific societies and held significant offices in many of them. He was the first chairman of the Hydrology Division of the Geological Society of America, chairman of the Groundwater Division of the American Geophysical Union, president of the Association of American State Geologists, vice president and president of the American Geological Institute, vice president and president of the International Association of Hydrogeologists, chairman of the

Board of Trustees of the Geological Society of America Foundation, and editor-in-chief of *Environmental Geology*. He also served on numerous advisory panels to federal agencies, including Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Environmental Protection Agency, USGS, and the U.S. Department of the Interior. In each of these positions he demonstrated an extraordinary ability to visualize all aspects of a problem and focus the efforts of individuals in the group on solving it.

Among Dr. LaMoreaux's many awards were honorary memberships in 10 societies in the United States and abroad. He was elected to NAE in 1987 and served on numerous National Academies boards and committees throughout his career. These included the Board on Radioactive Waste Management, Committee on Hazardous Waste Management, National Committee for the International Hydrogeological Decade, Board on Mineral and Energy Resources, Geotechnical Board, and Board on Earth Sciences and Resources.

Colleagues and friends have described Phil LaMoreaux as "a wonderful, compassionate man" who could "charm a bird out of a tree," "a tough taskmaster who gave you a job to do and expected you to do it," and "someone who valued talent and was willing to give you a chance." Family members often accompanied him on international trips, and his youngest son, Jim LaMoreaux, recalls: "He never met a stranger. He traveled all over the world, and it didn't matter what country or what culture—he was interested in people and their culture. . . . Whether it was a colleague or a student that he taught, or an employee, he always imparted something special . . . that they really appreciated, and (they) learned to become better professionals and people because of it."

While Phil was engaged in a project to discover and develop groundwater resources deep beneath the Western Desert in Egypt, he developed a passion for the study of the biblical Exodus and the parting of the Red Sea. This led to publication of a book, written with an Egyptian colleague, on applications of hydrogeological theories to aspects of Moses' trek across the Egyptian desert.

Philip E. LaMoreaux is survived by his wife of 64 years, Bunnie LaMoreaux; two sons, Philip E. LaMoreaux, Jr. and James W. LaMoreaux; a daughter, Karen LaMoreaux Bryan (deceased as of March 9, 2009); and nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild. This extraordinary professional and gentleman has left an unparalleled legacy.

From the family

To relax dad liked to spend time with his family at a farm about 15 miles outside of town. Many special memories linger of birthdays, anniversaries and holidays celebrated at the cabin on the property. He also tended a garden and loved to share the fruits of his labors with friends and family members. Many people who were sick or in need of an emotional lift were given beautiful flowers and vegetables from his garden to brighten their day. His family was much like his garden.

He loved his wife, children, and grandchildren and was very generous in his time and contributions to their lives. He also touched the lives of their friends, many of whom said he was like a father figure to them. In fact, during the almost 65 years that he and mom were married they traveled all over the world visiting friends and meeting with colleagues and former students with whom they had stayed in close contact. They had many wonderful and unique experiences that they shared together and with this extended family. Dad published an annual series of vignettes of their personal memories and numerous travels which he gave to family and friends.

Although the immediate family knew many of these people and/or had heard stories about them, we were overwhelmed by the condolences from around the world that helped us know how many lives dad had impacted. Dad lived his life to the fullest and shared his enthusiasm for life and his work with all of us and would want us to do the same.

