



Eugene W. Weber

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1910–1989

By Robert L. Smith

Eugene W. Weber, retired water resources engineer and planner, died on February 14, 1989, at the age of seventy-eight. Born in Staceyville, Iowa, December 8, 1910, he obtained his engineering education at the University of Minnesota, where he received a B.S. in civil engineering.

Elected to membership in the National Academy of Engineering in 1979, Gene had an internationally established reputation in water resources planning. His primary career from 1931 to 1965 was spent in the service of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. At his retirement from the corps, he was serving as both special assistant, Chief of Planning, and deputy director, Civil Works for Policy. Following retirement from the civil service, he served as a consultant to various federal, state, and private organizations and internationally with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

There are four separate aspects of Mr. Weber's career that deserve specific comment. During World War II, he entered into active service from his reserve status as a captain. Several years later after service in Washington, London, Normandy, and Paris, he returned to reserve status as a colonel. His active military service, in keeping with his ensuing professional career, was served with distinction. For his accomplishments he received the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, the Army Commendation Ribbon, and the French Crois-de-Guerre.

His career with the Corps of Engineers literally touched all of the waters of this nation. He was a consummate team player, and many of his contributions to the literature were embodied in committee reports. These ranged from professional organizational efforts, including National Research Council assignments, to Presidential policy exercises. One of the most significant of these efforts was titled *Proposed Practices for Economic Analysis of River Basin Projects*. This 1950 report to the Federal Inter-Agency Basin Committee, revised in 1958, came to be known as the "Green Book." It became the foundation for federal project evaluation practice. As such, it served as the forerunner for subsequent congressional and executive policy documents in this general arena. A detailed accounting of his many corps assignments would demonstrate clearly that his overall engineering contributions have had a major influence on the Corps of Engineers civil works program. Gene received numerous citations and honors for this portion of his career. Included were the Rockefeller Public Service Award in 1963, the Department of Army Exceptional Service Award in 1963, and the Department of Defense Civilian Service Award in 1964.

For a quarter of a century, Mr. Weber served, concurrent with his corps responsibilities, a second major role for his country. This began in 1948 when President Truman appointed him a commissioner on the United States Section of the International Joint Commission, United States and Canada. He continued in this role until 1963, serving under five presidents. As a commissioner, he became deeply involved in the problems of the Columbia River, the St. Lawrence Seaway Project, and the Great Lakes. In this role he became highly respected by both American and Canadian interests for his objectivity and technical knowledge. Upon his resignation from the commission in 1973, the Prime Minister of Canada presented him with a Certificate of Appreciation for Outstanding Service. He also received the U.S. Department of State Superior Honor Award, and in 1974 he was the recipient of the "Can-Am" Civil Engineering Amity Award.

Gene's professional efforts extended beyond the workplace to numerous professional organizations. He was especially active in the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) where he held

several offices, including terms as president of the National Capital Section, chair of four national committees, and member of the national board of directors. In 1977 he received the ASCE Julian Hinds Award for "distinguished service to water resources planning," and in 1978 he was designated as an honorary member of ASCE.

Gene Weber was a most dedicated individual. Both his country and his profession are the better because of his efforts. He was one of those rare individuals who was equally at home discussing engineering concepts or negotiating with nontechnical decision makers.