



William H. Mueser

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1900-1985

By Richard H. Tatlow III and
Anton Tedesko

William H. Mueser, a world-renowned civil engineer and partner of Mueser Rutledge Consulting Engineers, was born in New York City April 10, 1900, and died in Charlottesville, Virginia, on June 25, 1985. He was elected a member of the National Academy of Engineering in 1978. Mr. Mueser was a constructionman's engineer, always ready to roll up his sleeves and go to work. He was as comfortable making technical decisions on complicated design problems as he was plunging into a construction problem in the field. He used the science of engineering as a tool to supplement his own practical experience covering more than fifty years in the heavy construction field. In addition to knowledge and experience, he was that rare individual who brought creative imagination and versatility to bear on each problem. These qualities, combined with total dedication to his profession, resulted in outstanding contributions over the years to the art and science of foundation engineering.

Bill Mueser came from a family of engineers. His father was a pioneer in reinforced concrete construction in the 1890s and the early part of this century, his specialty being the design of concrete bridges throughout the country. Bill was raised in New York City and spent his career there. He attended DeWitt Clinton High School and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), obtaining his B.S. in civil

engineering in 1922. Bill did graduate work at the Technische Hochschule in Berlin, Germany, in 1922 and 1923. His devotion to MIT continued from his first association. He was vice-president of his class from graduation until his retirement and for many years his service included interviewing candidates for admission to the Institute. On the completion of his engineering studies in October 1923, he joined the staff of Moran, Maurice & Proctor, predecessor firm to Mueser Rutledge Consulting Engineers. His first assignment was the deep foundation construction for the Barclay-Vesey Building of the New York Telephone Company. This was followed by many deep foundations in lower Manhattan, such as for the Chase Manhattan Bank headquarters, the addition to the New York Stock Exchange at 20 Broad Street, and land construction for the \$1.1 billion Battery Park City complex of office and apartment buildings. He pioneered in replacing the expensive compressed air caissons with deep open foundations for major buildings and bridges throughout the United States. Examples are Nos. 1, 2, and 99 Wall Street.

Bill Mueser became a partner in the firm in 1936, handling major projects for the firm until his retirement in 1975 after fifty-two years of service. At the start of World War II he was the partner assigned to represent the firm in the Drydock Engineers, a combination of four firms assembled to carry out the design of major graving docks for the U.S. Navy's Bureau of Yards and Docks. He was involved in the design and construction of many drydocks, including the one at Bremerton, Washington, which was the world's deepest and largest in volume of ship space. This dock has a length of 1,152 feet, a width of 188 feet, and a depth of 53 feet below high tide.

He was a partner in Pardo Proctor, Freeman & Mueser, Caracas, Venezuela, from 1944 to 1951.

Deep foundations for bridges were a major part of his firm's work during Bill's long association and leadership.

Some of the interesting jobs were the specially designed pneumatic caissons for the San Francisco Bay Bridge (240 feet deep); the Huey P. Long Bridge in New Orleans; the Bronx-Whitestone in New York City; the Tacoma Narrows Bridge in Washington; and the Rapids Bridge, Quebec, Canada. His later work included bridge foundations for the Delaware River Crossing of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, as well as bridges and earthwork designs for sections of the Indiana Toll Road and Delaware Interstate Highway.

Bill was the author of a great many engineering reports on foundation and soil problems as they related to construction projects. All were carefully and uniquely thought out, and each added to his outstanding reputation.

Bill Mueser was particularly proud of his work on a number of public projects. Among these were the underpinning of the East Front of the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C., the firm's participation as general soils consultant for the Washington Metro subway, foundation design for the United Nations Secretariat and General Assembly Buildings in New York City, and the Empire State Plaza in Albany, New York.

He was a registered Professional Engineer in seventeen states and active in the New York Planning Board. He was also a member of The Moles, American Arbitration Association Panel, American Concrete Institute, American Institute of Consulting Engineers (past vice-president, council), American Road Builders Association, American Society of Testing Materials, Boston Society of Civil Engineers, Concrete Industry Board, Engineers' Joint Council (past member Engineering Manpower Commission), Society of American Military Engineers, U.S. National Council on Soil Mechanics & Foundation Engineering, and New York Building Congress (governor). He received the Metropolitan Section's "Engineer of the Year" Award in 1958 and the Moles' Member Award in 1975. He was also named an honorary member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, that society's highest honor.

Bill Mueser was married on April 21, 1925, to the late

Edna M. Meyer and they lived in Bedford Village, New York, where they enjoyed a happy and busy life. They were active in church work and always contributed to worthy causes. They had four children: Caryl Adele, William Henry, Robert Ranson, and Gayle Evelyn (Mrs. Arthur Schulman). Bill, Jr. and Robert are engineers, following their own careers in construction.

