

## **EARLE JARDINE KLOHN (1927–2013)**

By Bryan D. Watts, 2015



Earle J. Klohn was born in Winnipeg in 1927 to Frank and Florence Klohn. The family moved to Edmonton in 1937.

Earle graduated from the University of Alberta in Civil Engineering in 1950 and moved to California to work for O.J. Porter and Company. His time there was short-lived because the outbreak of the Korean War made all men of Earle's age eligible for service in the US Army, US citizens or not.

After one year in California, Earle returned to Edmonton to work for Dr. Bob Hardy in the Yukon. During his time there, he enrolled in a Master's program in Civil Engineering, again at the University of Alberta, and specialized in soil mechanics under Dr. R.M. Hardy. In a recognition of these early ties to the University of Alberta, and the importance of mine tailings which occupied much of his career, a scholarship was established in his name at the University of Alberta in 2010 to promote tailings research.

Earle Klohn won many awards for his contributions to geotechnical engineering, including the Leggett Award which was presented to him by Dr. Leggett personally in 1990. After completing his Master's degree, he moved to Vancouver to join Charlie Ripley in his new firm, Ripley and Associates. That firm is now (2015) called Klohn Crippen Berger Ltd. Earle was to be the longest serving President of the firm and was instrumental in establishing it nationally and inter-nationally. However, he was always an engineer at heart; primarily in water and tailings dam design. He designed some of the most challenging dam projects in Western Canada. One was the E.B. Campbell Dam in Saskatchewan which was the subject of a technical paper in the Canadian Geotechnical Journal in 1967. He worked on the design of many dams both as designer and reviewer.

Earle Klohn made perhaps his greatest impact in geotechnical engineering in tailings dam design. He introduced engineering design concepts to tailings dams in Western Canada in the 1960s. He was also a leader in the seismic design of tailings dams. He was introduced to the subject by Arthur Casagrande after the 1964 great Alaska earthquake when they had a joint assignment to establish setback distances for numerous pulp and paper mills from potential liquefaction flowslides in deltas along the coast of British Columbia. The most comprehensive seismic design of a tailings dam at that time was the Brenda Dam at Peachland in the interior of British Columbia which was documented at a Missouri Rolla case

histories conference in 1984. Earle also designed the foundations for many large pulp and paper mills for the H.A. Simons group. His long relationship with Simons, ultimately culminated in the merger of their civil engineering group with Klohn Leonoff to become Klohn Crippen.

Earle was a dedicated family man with three children. He was also an athlete who enjoyed golfing most of his life. To the younger engineering members of his firm, he was always kind, helpful, and decisive.