

FINTAN JOSEPH HEFFERNAN (1935-2022)

By Lisa Coyne



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At the Mississippi River bridge in Ontario, mentoring a young Golder engineer

Fin Heffernan passed away peacefully on February 5, 2022 at the age of 86.

Born on February 26, 1935, Fin completed his undergraduate studies at McGill University in 1957 and received a prestigious Athlone Fellowship to undertake post-graduate studies at Imperial College in the UK. After graduating with a DIC in 1958, he stayed in London and completed his DBA at the London School of Economics in 1959. He returned to Canada and began his consulting engineering career first with Geocon, then joined Golder Associates in 1964 as one of the firm's early founders.

Fin was a key figure in Golder's Canadian success. He started Golder's office in Ottawa, rising to serve as president of Eastern Canada and then president of Golder's Canadian operations. He worked with Golder long into retirement, spending more than 55 years maintaining the company's reputation for geotechnical excellence and mentoring and inspiring generations of geotechnical engineers.

Throughout his career, Fin was involved in numerous national and international geotechnical projects. He spent a significant portion of his later career on bridge and highway projects for Ontario's Ministry of Transportation (MTO), proudly continuing to serve Golder's very first client. His geotechnical expertise has been applied to almost every highway and a large proportion of bridges in MTO's eastern Ontario network and beyond.

Fin's heart was devoted to his wife and family, as well as to his extended family of colleagues and clients in geotechnical consulting, until the end. He was a great friend and mentor to many and a true inspiration in the geotechnical profession.

He was the beloved husband of Louise Heffernan, dear father of the late Joanne, Steve, Mike and Leslie, cherished dad of Marc, Claude and Sandra, and proud grandfather to 20 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.