

STEWART RONALD (STEW) SINCLAIR

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Stew Sinclair was one of the first MSc graduates in soil mechanics and foundations at the University of Alberta in 1947. He obtained his degree under the supervision of R.M. Hardy and moved on to join the Department of Civil Engineering, where he taught courses in soil mechanics and foundation engineering until 1976. Stew's untimely death due to an aneurism in 1976 occurred at one of his favourite spots in the world, a cabin retreat near Rocky Mountain House, Alberta. Stew was the Head of the Department of Civil Engineering from 1959 until 1973. He taught courses in both undergraduate and postgraduate soil mechanics. His postgraduate soil mechanics courses, particularly the one focussed on laboratory testing of soils is remembered by everyone who ever took it as the course where we learned almost everything we needed to know about soil mechanics.

Stew was fondly known to his students as 'Stoneface' due to his predilection for never smiling. However, his serious nature was limited to the classroom, as outside the university and in his professional activities, he was known to have very good sense of humour, to love a party, and to enjoy a very active outdoor life.

Stew was one of the founding partners of R.M. Hardy and Associates and Materials Testing Laboratories in the 1950s. The companies are now part of the AGRA Earth and Environmental group. He was responsible for many of the site investigations carried out in Western Canada at that time. His reports were very carefully written with attention to the geologic and engineering details, reflecting his teaching style. They served as excellent examples for the more junior engineers that followed in his footsteps. Although not widely recognized, his achievements in engineering, particularly in the field of education and training were outstanding. One other notable achievement for the University of Alberta and for Canada was that he was the person who recruited Dr. Norbert R. Morgenstern to return to Canada from Imperial College of Science and Technology in London, England, where he was teaching and conducting research. Stew Sinclair made a major contribution to the teaching of soil mechanics and foundation engineering at the University of Alberta and in establishing the framework for the group to become one of the most outstanding Civil Engineering Departments in the world for undergraduate study, postgraduate study and research.