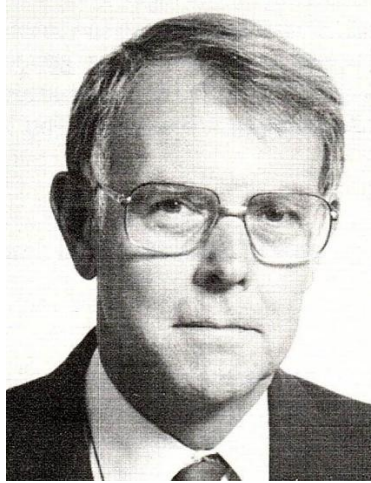


Alan Insley (1931-2004)

By Doug VanDine, with assistance from Kate Insley



Alan Insley was born on February 11, 1931, in New Westminster, BC, where he was raised. His family, on his father's side, came to BC during the 1860s BC gold rush. (One of his great uncles skippered the paddle wheeler *Skuzzy*, which transported supplies for the gold miners up the Fraser River.)

Al graduated from the University of British Columbia with a Bachelor of Applied Science in Civil Engineering in 1953. After graduation, he initially worked in structural bridge engineering in Vancouver, then for M.M. Dillon (now Dillon Consulting), a general civil engineering consulting firm in London, ON. In 1956, Al joined the Research Division of Ontario Hydro where he was introduced to the relatively new field of soil mechanics.

In 1957, Al married Kate, and they moved to London, England, where he obtained a Master of Science from the University of London, Imperial College, in 1959. His thesis was "The behaviour of bored foundation piles in London Clay".

Upon graduation from Imperial College, Al, Kate and their first of four children returned to Canada where he joined, the recently formed, R.C. Thurber & Associates in Victoria, BC. He worked with Thurber Engineering (as it is now known) from 1959 until he retired in 1991. His positions included Soils Engineer, Principal Engineer, Chief Engineer, Managing Director and President. For periods of time, to help with the solid growth of Thurber Engineering's then newer offices, Al moved his family first to Edmonton and then Vancouver. After retirement from Thurber, Al did a bit of international consulting.

Throughout his career, Al was involved in many significant and some innovative geotechnical projects in Western Canada. These included major hydroelectric dams for BC Hydro, major highway, railway and forestry bridges in BC and Alberta, and the foundation investigations and designs of several major buildings in the lower BC mainland.

Early in his career with Thurber Engineering, Al designed and built very high-confining pressures soil and rock triaxial testing equipment, the first of its kind in Canada. This equipment quickly gained a deserved reputation and samples from numerous BC Hydro,

Hydro-Québec, US and other international dams were sent to Victoria for testing under Al's supervision.

Always keen to learn, in 1967, Al took a sabbatical from Thurber Engineering and attended Harvard University as a Visiting Engineer under Arthur Casagrande. In 1978, he took another sabbatical and attended the Banff School of Advanced Management.

Outside the technical field of geotechnical engineering, Al was involved with the Victoria sections of the Engineering Institute of Canada and Camp 23 of the Ritual of the Calling of an Engineer (Iron Ring Ceremony).

Al is survived by his wife, Kate and four children, Mark, Stephen, Amanda and Tom. Although he loved his profession, his first love was his family, with whom he enjoyed many activities, particularly skiing and sailing their sailboat named *Skuzzy 2*, a nod to his great uncle. Al collapsed from an aneurism on the Royal Victoria Yacht Club docks and died the following day, January 20, 2004, shortly before turning 73.