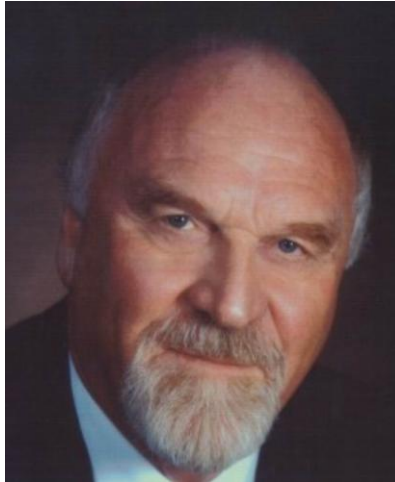


JOHN LAURENCE SEYCHUK (1931-2021)

Based on a Toronto Star obituary, December 2021 and
a CGS GeoNiagara 2021 video, September 2021



John Seychuck was born on June 25, 1931, near Dauphin, Manitoba. While growing up he attended a one-room school while working on his family's 160-acre farm. John was always proud of his humble farm-boy beginnings. Immediately after high school, and before being convinced, he could go to university, he worked as a surveyor for the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA).

On graduating from the University of Manitoba in civil engineering in 1954, John was awarded an Athlone Fellowship to undertake post-graduate studies in soil mechanics in England. For his studies, he was awarded the Diploma of Imperial College (DIC), equivalent to a Master's degree. He stayed in the UK for another year working on soil investigation projects and, during this time met Hugh Golder, a British soil mechanics pioneer who had not yet immigrated to Canada.

Returning to Canada in 1956, John joined the soil mechanics consulting firm Geocon in Montreal and shortly thereafter was transferred to Toronto. At Geocon, he worked first as a Senior Soils Engineer, then District Engineer, under the mentorship of Fred Matich. In the early 1960s, John joined Hugh Golder, Victor Milligan and Larry Soderman in the newly formed Ontario-based geotechnical consulting firm of Golder Associates. John worked with Golder for the remainder of his career.

Over the years, John made a tremendous contribution to Golder, both technically and administratively. He provided technical and business management expertise on a range of geotechnical engineering projects in all parts of the world, including a 2-year residency in Australia with his young family in the early 1970s. During his career, he held numerous senior positions with Golder including Principal, Vice President Eastern Canada, President and Chairman of the Board. On retirement in 1996, John continued his association with Golder as a senior consultant and continued to mentor younger professionals until 2019. John was always gregarious and very approachable, and was fondly remembered by many as "Big Bad John".

John was also very active in a number of engineering professional societies. He served as President of the Canadian Geotechnical Society (CGS 1993-1994), the Engineering Institute of Canada (EIC 1996-1998) and as the North American Vice President of the International Society of Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ISSMGE). He was also an active member with the Consulting Engineers of Ontario, the Consulting Engineers of Canada and the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (now Engineers Canada). He was a recipient of several engineering-related fellowships, awards and medals. John was elected Fellow of the Engineering Institute of Canada (EIC) in 1990, and awarded the EIC's CP Railway Engineering Medal in 1991 and the John B. Stirling Medal in 2006. In 1996, he received the CGS's most prestigious Robert F. Legget Medal.

John was also very active in the Ukrainian community and other organizations. He was a founding member of the St. Demetrius Ukrainian Catholic Church Parish in Toronto. He served as Chairman and President of the St. Demetrius Development Corporation spearheading the construction of this Ukrainian community's church, school, seniors' residence and nursing home. He was an avid supporter and sponsor of community youth softball teams and was a charter member of the Knights of Columbus Sheptytsky Council. John also served as a member of the Toronto Police Services Tribunal. In 1993, for his community service, he was awarded the Governor General's 125th Anniversary of Canada Commemorative Medal.

In his later years, John went back to his farming roots and he loved to get away to "Stonehedge", his hobby farm south of Georgian Bay, Ontario. John died on December 9, 2021, leaving behind his wife, Vera, son John, daughter Carolyn, and stepchildren Darlene, Raymond, Michael and Gregory. John was predeceased by his first wife, Luba.

"Big Bad John" will be missed by many. As John would always sign off, "Peace".