

GEORGE GEOFFREY (GEORG GOTTFRIED) MEYERHOF (1916-2003)

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The many friends of George Geoffrey Meyerhof CM, PhD, DEng hc, DSc hc, Drlng hc, DesSc hc, LLD hc, Hon FICE, FEIC, FASCE, FRSC, FCAE, PEng will be saddened to hear of his death on January 2, 2003, age 86, in the QEII Health Sciences Centre, Halifax.

Dr. Meyerhof was born May 29, 1916, in Kiel, Germany. He was Head of the Civil Engineering Department and Dean of Engineering at the Technical University of Nova Scotia in Halifax for many years and was latterly emeritus Professor of Civil Engineering, Dalhousie University. He was the son of the late Professor Otto Meyerhof, Nobel Laureate in Physiology.

After graduating with a BSc degree from London University in 1938, he worked for several years with consulting structural engineers in England and subsequently obtained a PhD degree in engineering. In 1946 he joined the staff of the Building Research Station near London, England, where he carried out extensive research on soil mechanics and foundation problems. For his distinguished contributions in this field, the University of London awarded him the degree of Doctor of Science in 1954. After coming to Canada in 1953, Dr. Meyerhof became Supervising Engineer in the Montréal Office of the Foundation of Canada Engineering Corporation where he was in charge of the design of various buildings, bridges and other civil engineering structures.

Dr. Meyerhof was the author of more than 200 papers, and a book of selected papers on structural and soil mechanics subjects which have been published by scientific and engineering societies in various countries. His work combined theory, field observations and construction practice in a way that has had significant influence on foundation engineering practice in Canada and overseas. In recent years (1998), he prepared a short booklet "Memories of a Civil Engineer in World War II" in which he describes his studies and early professional life in England during the period of most active growth in soil mechanics. The Canadian Geotechnical Society has recognized the importance of Dr. Meyerhof's work by naming the annual award of its Soil Mechanics and Foundations Division the 'Geoffrey G. Meyerhof Award'. In 1974 he received the most senior award of the Society, the R.F. Legget Award. He was the first President of the Society in 1972-1974.

Dr. Meyerhof was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Engineering and of many other scientific and engineering societies in Canada and abroad, and a registered professional engineer. He was a founding member of the Halifax Grammar School. In 1999 Dr. Meyerhof was honoured by being appointed a member of the Order of Canada for distinguished service in geotechnical engineering. The Association of Professional Engineers of Nova Scotia awarded him their most prestigious recognition, the F. H. Sexton Award, for his exceptional professional engineering services rendered to the Province of Nova Scotia. He was awarded the year 2000 Honorary Fellowship of the Institution of Civil Engineers (United Kingdom) for his world-renowned contributions to geotechnical engineering.

He received the Centennial Medal of Canada, the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal, and the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for outstanding service to Canada. In addition, he has received the Duggan Medal and the Julian C. Smith Medal of the Engineering Institute of Canada, the Engineering Award of the Association of Professional Engineers of Nova Scotia, and the Karl Terzaghi Award of the American Society of Civil Engineers for his outstanding contribution to foundation engineering. He was a Council Member of the Engineering Institute of Canada, a Council Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers of Great Britain, a Terzaghi Lecturer of the American Society of Civil Engineers, a Buchanan Lecturer of Texas A&M University, and a Hardy Lecturer of the Canadian Geotechnical Society.

The Technical University of Aachen, Germany, awarded Dr. Meyerhof the honorary degree of Doctor of Engineering, and the University of Ghent, Belgium, awarded him the honorary degree of Doctorate of Science. He was also awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Engineering from the Technical University of Nova Scotia, as well as honorary Doctor of Science degrees from McMaster University, Hamilton, and Queen's University, Kingston. He received the honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Concordia University. Dr. Meyerhof is survived by his wife, Ingrid Goering Meyerhof; two sons, Thomas (Dorothy), Ottawa, Peter (Mary Anne), Sonoma, CA and their son, Geoffrey. He is also survived by his sister; Bettina Emerson, Seattle, WA; and brother, Walter, Menlo Park, CA. He was predeceased by his first wife, Elisabeth Meyerhof.