Memorial to Boyd Paulson Jr.

Edward J. Jaselskis
Editor

The construction academic community is deeply saddened by the loss of Boyd Paulson, Jr., a truly great teacher, scholar, and humanitarian who has touched the lives of so many. A compilation of those people he touched are listed below.

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Boyd Paulson Jr., the Charles H. Leavell Professor of Civil Engineering, served in the Construction Engineering and Management Program at Stanford University for 31 years. During this time, he also served as a visiting professor at the University of Tokyo in 1978, the Technical University of Munich in 1983, the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland from 1990–1991, and the University of Hawaii in 1998.

Dr. Paulson was born on March 1, 1946, in Providence, R.I. His father was a manager in heavy construction, and his family moved frequently. In 1962 he met his future wife, Jane Kingdon, while his family was living in a construction camp in Australia. They were married on Feb. 12, 1970. Dr. Paulson is survived by his wife, Jane Paulson, his father, Boyd C. Paulson; and son, Jeffrey Paulson, all of Menlo Park, Calif.; daughter, Laura Paulson, of Culver City, Calif.; and sisters, Virginia Vadnais of Moraga, Calif.; Beth Krewedl of Tahoe Donner, Calif.; and Kathy Icenogle of Dunstable, Mass.

He enrolled at the University of Utah in 1963, and, in 1965 he transferred to Stanford where he eventually earned three degrees in civil engineering: his Bachelor's degree in 1967, Master's in 1969 and Doctorate in 1971. Paulson began his teaching career at the University of Illinois where he taught as an assistant professor of civil engineering from 1972 to 1974. Paulson then returned to Stanford to join the faculty and was appointed the Charles H. Leavell Professor of Civil Engineering.

Throughout his career, Paulson maintained close ties with the heavy and industrial construction industry, serving as principal investigator on more than 20 projects funded by the federal government and others. He worked on two of the largest U.S. urban rail projects in the second half of the 20th century—BART, in Northern California, and Metrorail, in Washington, D.C.—as a researcher focusing on lessening the disruption caused by construction in urban areas.

His other construction projects included a dam and tunnel on Australia's Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Scheme, a pipeline in Alaska, and a 6-month analysis of urban tunneling in Japan. In 1995, he volunteered to oversee construction of Peninsula Habitat for Humanity's $2 million, 24-unit condominium project for low-income residents in East Palo Alto, Calif., and, he eventually joined the organization's board of directors. He also was on the board of the Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition, one of California's largest nonprofit providers of affordable housing, which was launched in the late 1960s by members of the Stanford community and now houses 13,000 low-income residents in 75 developments.

Paulson was a member of ASCE, the American Society for Engineering Education, the Urban Land Institute, and the Tau Beta Pi and Sigma Xi honor societies. He chaired the ASCE Committee on Professional Construction Management from 1974 to 1977 and the National Science Foundation's Civil and Environmental Engineering Division Advisory Committee from 1983 to 1989. He also served as vice chair of the U.S. National Committee on Tunneling Technology (1986–1989) and the National Research Council Panel for Assessment of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (1995–1998).

His professional honors include ASCE's 1980 Walter L. Huber Civil Engineering Research Prize, Germany's Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Research Fellowship in 1983, and ASCE's 1984 Construction Management Award and the 1993 Peurifoy Construction Research Award. In 1984 Paulson was named a distinguished scholar by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China, and in 1986 he was given the Project Management Institute's Distinguished Contributions Award. In 1990–1991, he received senior faculty research and teaching scholarships from the Fulbright Foundation and the British Council. He was elected to the National Academy of Construction in 2001.

He is the author and coauthor of two books and more than 100 papers, many of them in ASCE's *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*. His research and teaching interests included the construction of affordable housing, international construction, and finding new applications for computers.

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In addition to volunteering his own time, Paulson enlisted the help of engineering students through graduate courses that required hands-on construction of new homes at Peninsula Habitat for Humanity building sites. For his efforts, the university awarded Paulson a 2004 Miriam Aaron Roland Volunteer Service Prize, which is given annually to faculty members who have demonstrated a personal commitment to community service and have engaged students to integrate academic scholarship with significant volunteer work.

Boyd Paulson was a beacon of integrity, humility, and caring for everyone who had the privilege to know him during his long and productive career of service to the profession of civil engineering. The way that Boyd lived his life and the courageous and dignified way with which he faced his terminal illness provide a role model for all of us.

Boyd C. Paulson Jr. died of colon cancer on Thursday, December 1, 2005. A memorial service for Boyd was held on the Stanford campus on February 7, 2006.

Sources

Mark Schwartz
⟨http://www.stanford.edu/dept/news/pr/2005/pr-paulson-120705.html⟩

Raymond Levitt

Individual Tributes to Dr. Boyd Paulson

I first met Boyd Paulson when he arrived at the University of Illinois as a young CE professor in 1972. So much of his career was tied to Stanford that probably very few people remember or know about those early years in Urbana–Champaign. I was a graduate student in the last year of my doctoral research, and Boyd became a member of my Ph.D. examination committee. We had many lively discussions about research and computer-based methods beyond CPM. I realized very quickly that he was a leader and innovator even at this early stage of his career. Boyd became the historic link between Illinois and Stanford—the two premier construction graduate programs at that time. This was the beginning of a friendship that lasted for over 30 years.

Boyd was a very special person. Maria and I had the privilege of visiting with Jane and Boyd in at their home in Menlo Park in the fall of 2002. We had a wonderful evening of reminiscing and talking about plans for the future. He was very dedicated to carrying on with the new initiatives that he had founded at Stanford, linking the classroom with hands on experience for students in the context of Habitat for Humanity projects. It is the Boyd of that evening we will hold in our thoughts.

He lived a singular and extraordinary life of great achievement and success. Boyd was a giant in our engineering discipline and will always be remembered as one of our founding fathers. He was the scholar-practitioner who was equally at ease in the classroom, conducting visionary research, or on the job site supervising construction operations in the field. His loss leaves a void and it will never feel right that he is no longer with us.

Dan Halpin

I had met Boyd years before I asked him to write a chapter in our managing safety book. He told me he didn't know anything about safety, and he was focusing on Habitat and training his students by letting them learn by doing. I responded by saying that "you just put them in harms way without giving them any safety training?" He was silent for a time and then said, "you got me." He then proceeded to write a landmark chapter on training volunteer workers before putting them in harms way. He was a very special man who truly changed our industry for the better in many and varied ways.

Rick Coble

Perhaps my most vivid memory of Boyd was a walking tour of the Stanford University campus he gave me during my interview there in February of 1990. He spoke with me about the history of Stanford and pointed out minor earthquake damage as we passed the various structures.

James D. Lutz

I would like to acknowledge the loss of our colleague, Boyd Paulson. I was fortunate to contact him by telephone this fall and we had a very nice conversation, discussing our many years of working in construction education and in being friends.

I was greatly saddened by his passing, but rejoice in his life and his contributions to our profession.

Donn Hancher

I am pleased to offer some memories of Boyd, whom I knew for 30 years. We served on the Construction Research Council for several years, before the next generation of faculty took over. He was also a member of the National Academy of Construction, which granted him emeritus status in 1995. He wrote me a handwritten note thanking me for that status and explained that he was trying to get his affairs in order for his family during his last months. He was conscientious to the end. I have several other fond memories, including a trip to Japan to review Japanese construction technology for NSF. Boyd, Shirley, and I went together to review the world's longest suspension bridge construction project and had our picture taken with Japanese leaders. Boyd and I stood on both ends, with the shorter Japanese and Shirley in between. The Japanese referred to Boyd and me as the "bookends." His stature was high throughout the industry. He was asked to serve as an outside academic on the search committee for my replacement as Director of the Construction Industry Institute, although he was never personally involved in CII. We will miss Boyd but will cherish the many good memories and contributions he left our profession and many of us personally.

Richard Tucker

Boyd was an outstanding teacher, mentor, colleague, and friend to so many of us. He worked hard to enable his student's learning, to create a supportive and challenging environment, and to bring significance to their work. He assumed the responsibility to find good people who had good attitudes and work ethic, to graduate them in a timely manner, and then to support them as they started their careers. He impacted thousands through his example. While he never knew all of these people, they all owe a part of their success to him.

Boyd lived a humble life, and was driven by the pursuit of excellence. He showed great concern for people, especially those

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less privileged. His actions and leadership of students and the community resulted in hundreds of families being able to live in low-income houses in the Bay Area. He truly was a civil engineer, a great person, and an inspiration to the profession. He left the world a far better place, and it will continue to improve through the actions of the people that he inspired.

Victor Sanvido

Boyd Paulson Jr. was a gentleman, friend, and a mentor to all, especially to those in construction education. Our first association was in the early 1980s when Boyd was on the Construction Division Executive Committee (EXCOM) at the same time I chaired the Construction Equipment and Techniques Committee. We worked together more closely, shortly after that, when he was Executive Committee Chair and I served as Secretary. In those years the Construction Research Council was working to establish the Peurifoy Construction Research Award, and, jointly with the EXCOM, we were all involved in finding the money to support the award and in obtaining ASCE's approval. Only by being there can one know the difficulty of establishing a new ASCE award. We all owe Boyd a debt of gratitude for his efforts in establishing this award to recognize achievements in construction research.

While Boyd was very active in ASCE construction activities that furthered construction education and research, the personal Boyd Paulson was the truly noble man. We at the Arizona State University, Del E. Webb School of Construction had the privilege of Boyd's company for a summer semester when he joined us in 1996 as a Visiting Eminent Scholar. He greatly enhanced our graduate program by teaching a course that summer, but his greatest impact was in mentoring our faculty and freely providing ideas for improving the school. Over the years since then, he continually supported the development of our faculty and the school. Boyd Paulson was a quiet man, but he was a catalyst for the success of many of us, and he will be sorely missed.

requiescat in pace

Cliff Schexnayder

On this sad moment, when we mourn the loss of one of the most inspiring members of our construction education and research community, Professor Boyd C. Paulson Jr., the Charles H. Leavell Professor of Civil Engineering at Stanford University, I am enclosing the link to the official Stanford News Release: ⟨http://www.stanford.edu/dept/news/pr/2005/pr-paulson-120705.html⟩

It contains a snapshot of the life of a great (yet always simple), inspiring man whose legacy in construction engineering and management, as an educator, as a researcher, as an exemplar of service, as a colleague, and as a friend, will live long into the future through the lives of all those people he touched in one way or another (including myself as just one of his hundreds of students, and dozens of Ph.D. advisees . . .).

May God bless his soul . . .

Jorge Vanegas

Boyd spent a semester on sabbatical at the University of Hawaii in Spring 1998, and he had considered coming back for another to regain his strength, but as is said—Man proposes, God disposes.

Amarjit Singh

Professor Paulson was an inspiring educator. He encouraged and influenced many (including me) in our academic endeavors. He will be missed!

Dulcy Abraham

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