



Donald C. Haney, Kentucky State Geologist and Director of the Kentucky Geological Survey 1978 to 1999. Kentucky and AASG lost a great leader, educator, and advocate for Kentucky's mineral and geological resources when Donald C. Haney died on June 8, 2014, at the age of 79. He was state geologist and director of the Kentucky Geological Survey at UK from 1978 to 1999, where he oversaw tremendous growth in the Survey. He served on state and national science and mineral resources committees, one of which was the Board on Earth Sciences and Resources for the National Research Council.

Don was the 11th state geologist of Kentucky following the very capable Wally Hagan who served as Kentucky State Geologist from 1958 to 1978.

He was one of the principal authors of the National Geologic Mapping Act, passed by the 102nd Congress in 1992. This act was to expedite geologic mapping in the U.S. and for those maps to be applied to land-use management, conservation of natural resources, and protection of groundwater and the environment. For this great achievement he was honored with the William Lyons Award for distinguished public service from UK's Martin School of Public Policy and Administration and the Ian Campbell Medal by the Geological Society of America and American Geosciences Institute.

Don's tenure as state geologist was marked by great progress in coal assessment, groundwater research, mine subsidence programs, earthquake monitoring, and the construction of computer databases to serve the public. He also sought legislation to create the Kentucky Groundwater Monitoring Network and Groundwater Data Repository, also passed by the General Assembly. The organization of geologic data and records that he oversaw now serves millions of online requests for vital information about Kentucky each year.

In the 1980s he saw the need for new offices for the Survey, so working with UK, industry, and public officials, he undertook construction of the Mining and Mineral Resources Building at UK.

Later, growth of the UK campus required a new building for storing cores and rock samples, so the Kentucky Well Sample and Core Library was opened on Iron Works Pike in 1997.

Don achieved the highest levels in his profession, serving as president of the Association of American State Geologists and president of the American Geological Institute. After retirement, he was appointed to the Kentucky River Authority by Gov. Paul Patton.

In Frankfort he was known as “Doc,” and could be seen carrying geologic maps, which he distributed freely. He was the founder and first chairman of the Geology Department at Eastern Kentucky University. That department achieved great distinction in the 1970s, and students he mentored went on to careers as state geologists in eight states; scores of others went into academia and industry. Don was instrumental in passing legislation establishing the Kentucky Board of Registration for Professional Geologists and served as a board member.

Don was stationed in the Philippines as an intelligence specialist in the U.S. Army from 1953 to 1956. There was much unrest in Southeast Asia and his unit was collecting intelligence particularly on Vietnam during the French-Indochina War and the Battle of Dien Bien Phu.

It is impossible to capture in these few words the profound impact of his accomplishments on Kentucky, but every map, publication, and online database that he made possible result in better decisions and wiser use of our land and resources, which will continue forever. All the honors, awards, and accomplishments that Don Haney achieved do not tell the story of his warm, friendly, outgoing personality and his love of people and politics. Don never met a stranger; he spoke to everyone and loved to tell stories and joke with people. He was born and raised in Ferguson, Ky., and received B.S. and M.S. degrees from UK and a Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee. He loved Kentucky basketball and sat in his seat one row from the top of Rupp Arena for every home game. At meetings and conferences, Don would make a point of greeting one and all. He was a great follower of politics and knew personally Kentucky’s political leadership in Frankfort and Washington, D.C., spanning five decades, and they knew and respected him. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Shirley and daughter Holly and granddaughter Bristol. He was preceded in death by his son Greg.

Jim Cobb, State Geologist and Director, Kentucky Geological Survey, University of Kentucky