

MEMORIAL TO ROBERT EARL HERSHEY, 1921-2004

By Ronald P. Zurawski

Robert E. Hershey, State Geologist of Tennessee from 1969 until 1985, died on March 16, 2004 in Nashville, Tennessee, after a battle with cancer. He was 82.

Mr. Hershey was born in Canton, Ohio on September 21, 1921. His early years were spent growing up in Colorado and New Mexico.

He majored in geology while attending Michigan College of Mining and Technology from 1939 to 1940, and New Mexico School of Mines from 1940 to 1942, and again in 1946, after serving 4-1/2 years in the Army Air Force during World War II. He received his bachelor's degree in geology from Vanderbilt University in 1951.

While a student at Vanderbilt, Hershey did part time work with the Tennessee Division of Geology. After graduation in July, 1951 he joined the staff of the Division of Geology as a geologist. In 1953 he resigned to work with the U.S. Bureau of Mines, studying coal reserves in Tennessee.

Between July, 1955 and December, 1957 he worked with the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, first as area geologist and later as assistant district geologist, stationed in Grand Junction, Colorado.

On January 1, 1958 Mr. Hershey returned to the Tennessee Division of Geology. He was appointed State Geologist in July of 1969, where he served until his retirement in 1985. During his tenure as state geologist, he established an environmental geology section and began publishing a new series of bulletins and maps pertaining specifically to environmental geology. The oil and gas program expanded under Hershey's direction, and he was instrumental in establishing and maintaining close contact with mining and oil and gas operations in the state. The growth of the division resulted in an increase in publications by the various sections of the division, and Hershey also initiated publication of nontechnical bulletins such as Bulletins 73 and 74, *Place Names of Tennessee* and *The Geologic History of Tennessee*, plus a new series on the geology of Tennessee's state parks. These publications are very popular with the general public and help promote general awareness of the functions of the Division of Geology.

In addition to directing the programs of the Division of Geology, Mr. Hershey served on the Southern Interstate Nuclear Board, an organization responsible for the study of uranium raw materials in 17 southern states. He was a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, the American Institute of Professional Geologists, the Association of American State Geologists, the Geological Society of America, and the Society of Economic Geologists.

Hershey was also active in community affairs. He was a life member and past president of Nashville Downtown Lions Club, past President of the Board at St Luke's Community Center, and past President of Middle Tennessee Camilla Club. He was an active communicant of Christ Church Episcopal Cathedral, where a celebration of his life was held on March 22, 2004.

He is survived by Suzanna, his wife of 59 years; daughters Catherine (Gene) Gwyn of Nashville, Tennessee, and Dianne Olson (Jon) of Seattle, Washington; and two grandchildren, Jon Eric and Katherine Olson, also of Seattle.