

John Chapman Frye, 1912-1982

John C. Frye, former state geologist of Kansas and of Illinois and an affiliate of AASG for more than 30 years, died November 12, 1982, of cancer at age 70 in Boulder, Colorado.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Ruth L. (Heizer) Frye, of 4470 Chippewa Drive, Boulder, Colorado 80303; two daughters, Sally Jean Schwarzlose, of Evanston, Illinois, and Terri Ruth Toedter, of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; and three grandchildren. A son, John Douglas, died in 1970.

John was born in Marietta, Ohio, July 25, 1912, the son of Harley E. and Maude V. (Chapman) Frye. He attended Marietta College, from which he received an A.B. degree in 1934 and an Sc.D. (hon.) degree in 1955. He attended Ohio State University in 1935 prior to going to the State University of Iowa, Iowa City, from which he received an M.S. degree in 1937 and a Ph.D. degree in 1938.

He served as a research assistant at the University of Iowa between 1935 and 1938, then joined the U.S. Geological Survey, Ground-Water Division, Kansas District, where he was a junior geologist and an assistant geologist. In 1942, he joined the Kansas State Geological Survey as assistant director and assistant state geologist. From 1945 to 1954, he was executive director of the Kansas Survey, and during the last two years was also state geologist. In 1954, he became chief of the Illinois State Geological Survey and state geologist, a position he held until he retired from the survey in 1974. In September 1974, he became executive director of the Geological Society of America and served in this position until his second retirement in June 1982.

During his affiliations with the two state surveys he held appointments as professor of geology at the University of Kansas (1942-54) and at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (1963-74). He also held temporary research appointments with the Texas Bureau of Economic Geology, the Desert Research Institute of the University of Nevada, and the New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources.

During his professional career of 47 years, he was author or co-author of more than 200 scientific articles, abstracts, reviews, administrative and committee reports, field guides, and popular articles. His principal scientific interests were Pleistocene, Tertiary, and groundwater geology and physiography. A. Bryon Leonard of the University of Kansas, Ada Swineford of the Kansas Geological Survey, and H. B. Willman and H. D. Glass of the Illinois Geological Survey were collaborators in many of his published reports. While chief of the Illinois Geological Survey he helped bring national attention to the concept of environmental geology, a term coined by James E. Hackett of the survey in 1963.

John served as a member of many committees and panels of the National Research Council for the National Academy of Sciences/Engineering, including the earth sciences division, geologic aspects of radioactive waste disposal, earth resources remote sensing, mineral science and technology, radioactive waste management, disposal in salt mines, and bedrock disposal at the Savannah River Plant. He was elected to the National Academy of Engineering in 1971. He served on the advisory committee to the Secretary of the Interior for the U.S. Geological Survey and received a Department of Interior Public Service Award in 1972. He served on the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, the American Commission on Stratigraphic Nomenclature, the Scientific Manpower Commission, advisory committee to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and advisory committee on future oil prospects of the National Petroleum Council.

He was a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; American Association of Petroleum Geologists; American Geological Institute (president, 1966); American Geophysical Union; American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers; American Institute of Professional Geologists (executive committee, 1969); Association of American State Geologists (editor, 1956-57, secretary-treasurer, 1957-58, vice president, 1958-59, president, 1960-61); Geological Society of America (councilor, 1959-61, associate editor, 1962-73, executive director, 1974-82); Society of Economic Geologists; Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists (vice president, 1965-66); Illinois Academy of Science (president, 1962-63); and the Illinois Mining Institute (executive board, 1958-61). He was a Mason and Rotarian and a member of Sigma Xi, Sigma Gamma Epsilon, Alpha Sigma Phi, and the Cosmos Club of Washington, D.C.

Despite heavy administrative responsibilities in Kansas, Illinois, and Boulder during 37 years of his service, John always managed to carry on his scientific research and spent much of his vacation time in the field. When John retired as chief of the Illinois Survey, a farewell production by the staff made good-natured allusions to his vacations spent studying the Ogallala of the High Plains or the Pecos River Valley in Texas for the Bureau of Economic Geology. After becoming executive director of GSA and while facing the numerous crises that occurred during his tenure, he continued his field research and produced significant reports for the New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources and the Illinois Geological Survey. He carried on field work with Byron Leonard in the Pecos Valley of New Mexico in September, shortly before his final illness. Leonard, H. B. Willman, and H. D. Glass are presently completing manuscripts that they were working on with John.

Yet John was ever attentive to his administrative responsibilities. Long-time members of AASG will recall that frequently John would be called with news of survey appropriation hearings during the annual meeting and would sometimes depart immediately for Champaign or Springfield.

He had a special fondness for AASG and served in most of its elected offices. Those of us who only knew *of* John Frye admire his career as scientist, administrator, and public servant. Those of us who knew him personally feel the same admiration and will also miss him as a warm, caring friend.

Robert E. Bergstrom