

## **A Tribute to Tracy W. Lusk, 1926 – 2010**

Charles T. Swann, Mississippi Mineral Resources Institute  
Adapted for AASG by Michael B. E. Bograd, State Geologist of Mississippi

It is with a great sense of loss and sadness that we learned that Tracy Wallace Lusk succumbed to illness on June 22, 2010.

Tracy was born in 1926 in Woodville, Mississippi, and he graduated from Hazlehurst High School in 1944. He served with the U.S. Army as a paratrooper and was stationed in Germany immediately after the end of World War II. After his army tour of duty, he attended Copiah-Lincoln Junior College in Wesson, Mississippi, and entered the University of Mississippi in 1948. At the University he obtained both his Bachelor of Science degree in Geological Engineering in 1950 and his Master of Science degree in Geology in 1951. During his studies at Ole Miss he became life-long friends with Dr. William Clifford Morse, then Chair of the Geology Department and State Geologist. Dr. Morse provided Tracy with the opportunity of student work for the Mississippi Geological Survey, which was headquartered in Ventress Hall. After he graduated he accepted a position working for the Survey as a geologist (in 1952), and in 1958 Tracy succeeded Dr. Morse as State Geologist. Tracy was author of a number of publications for the Geological Survey including Bulletin 80, Benton County Geology that was published in 1956. Under his leadership, the Survey published nine bulletins, including reports on the state's mineral resources, water supplies, heavy minerals, geology of three counties, and three innovative geologic studies along highways. He remained as State Geologist until June of 1962.



Following his work in the Geological Survey, he worked in private industry, working both as a consultant and operating a sand and gravel pit. His private industry work was fundamental to the development of Mississippi's Cretaceous bentonite resources in Monroe County and he became much in demand as a clay consultant. His experiences with sand and gravel resources both as a consultant and as a producer led to his reputation as an expert in the evaluation and utilization of the sand and gravel resources in Mississippi.

In 1983 Tracy was hired by the Mississippi Mineral Resources Institute (MMRI) as a Research Associate and worked closely with MMRI's Minerals Commercialization

Center (MCC). The MCC was a cooperative effort between the MMRI and the University's Business School. Tracy drew on his experience as a mineral producer to guide the business studies and evaluations conducted by the MMC. In 1984, he accepted the position as Associate Director working under the direction of the late Dr. Bob Woolsey. As Associate Director, he oversaw the day-to-day work of the Institute that included an initiative to characterize heavy minerals in Mississippi's coastal waters and the formation of a select group to act as technical assistants to the State of Mississippi, as salt domes were being investigated as potential high-level nuclear waste repositories. He retired from this position in December of 1992. After retirement he continued his association with the MMRI, often attended the MMRI Board meetings, and was always available to the Institute when the need arose.

Without doubt, the MMRI, School of Engineering, and the University of Mississippi will miss Tracy's support and enthusiasm. But equally important, Mississippi has lost one of its own -- a person who cared for the welfare of the State and the people that live here. Let us remember Tracy for the contributions he has made, the leadership he has demonstrated, and a life that we may well use as a role model.