

## **Matt Walton**

### **Minnesota Geological Survey Director, 1973 to 1986**

Professor Emeritus Matt Savage Walton died on February 25, 2004, at the age of 88. He was the Director of the Minnesota Geological Survey and a Professor in the Newton Horace Winchell School of Earth Sciences at the University of Minnesota. Matt was born September 16, 1915 in Lexington, Kentucky, a son of Matt Savage Walton and Liliias Oleno Wheeler Walton. He received his B.A. degree from The University of Chicago in 1936. From Columbia University he received his M.S. in 1946 and his Ph.D. in 1951. During World War II, he worked on exploration for strategic minerals in Alaska for the United States Geological Survey. He was a member of Yale University faculty from 1948 to 1965, and worked summers in the Adirondacks with New York State Geological Survey between 1948 and 1956. Matt was a Regent's Lecturer at UCLA between 1970 and 1973.



As a consulting geologist in Denver from 1972 to 1973, Matt worked in Somalia, Columbia, Ecuador, the Azores, Tanzania, Venezuela, Trinidad, and on projects in 26 states and 3 Canadian provinces. These included the Eisenhower Tunnel in Colorado and the New York City Water Tunnel #3.

Matt Walton had a distinguished career as Director of the Minnesota Geological Survey and University of Minnesota Professor from 1973 until 1986. The Minnesota Geological Survey was established in 1872 and until Professor Walton became director, the principal beneficiary of its research was the mining industry. Matt initiated successful research programs focused on environmental issues. In recognition of the contributions of his program in ground water studies, he was the first recipient of the Outstanding Service Award of the Minnesota Ground Water Association. He started two additional programs of considerable significance: first, the storage and ultimate recovery of waste heat on the Saint Paul campus and in an underground iron mine in Ely, Minnesota; and secondly, with support from the Legislative Commission on Mineral Resources, he developed a program of high resolution, low-level aeromagnetic data, which eventually provided aeromagnetic coverage of the entire state. This program was the first of its kind in North America. This database is in daily use, along with a database on subsurface geology that Walton also developed. He obtained initial funding for geophysical research, a kindergarten through high school educational outreach program, and a county geologic atlas program that provides geologic information for planning agencies. Walton championed the use of underground mined space for such purposes as the Civil Engineering building and the Minnesota Access Center under Anderson Library. During Matt's tenure as director, the Survey grew from a staff of 4 to 35 employees.

Matt was active in these Saint Paul community groups: President of Old Town Restoration and the Summit Hill Association; and was a member of Gown in Town, a faculty dining club. Matt passed way in hospital on February 25, a week after a fall. He is lovingly remembered by his wife Kay Ann Thorson, children Matt Savage III, Kate Johns, Lisa Baar, Anne Elizabeth and Owen Hardwick, and nine grandchildren, Charles, Kathryn, Matthew, Sarah, Elizabeth, Isabelle, Daniel, Nicholas, and Matt IV. He will be greatly missed.