



Norman Francis "Bill" Williams (1916-1998)

Norman Francis "Bill" Williams was the State Geologist of Arkansas from 1951 to 1995. He is missed immensely by people who knew and loved him. Bill was born and raised in Norman, Oklahoma, the son of A.J. Williams, renowned professor of geology at the University of Oklahoma. Bill received a degree in Geological Engineering in 1939 and taught Military Science at the University while continuing his education as a graduate student. He married Geneva West in June of 1943. While Bill was at his first military duty station their first child, Norman Jr., was born in Jackson, Mississippi. After a short period in Jackson, Major Williams began to serve his country in the Pacific, where he served in New Guinea and the Philippines. After the war he served in Osaka, Japan with the Occupation Forces and obtained the rank of Lt. Colonel.

In 1947 Bill Williams was hired as a geologist with the Arkansas Geological Survey in Little Rock, Arkansas. After his second child, Geneva, was born in Norman, Bill brought his wife and children to Little Rock, where his third child, Carolyn Sue, was born.

Norman Williams was appointed State Geologist and Director of the Arkansas Geological and Conservation Commission on February 15, 1951 and left state service on March 31, 1995. He had 47 ½ years of service with 44 years as State Geologist. During his leadership, the Arkansas Geological Commission helped to cause the development of a variety of mineral related industries, created a new state geologic map, established several co-operative programs with the USGS in geologic mapping, topographic mapping, and water resources. One of his pet projects were the boxes of rocks and minerals for school children and visitors to the State. Upon retirement, Bill was designated "State Geologist Emeritus" by the Arkansas Senate.

Bill considered his family and employees as his most valued assets. AASG was a very special organization and group of friends to him. During his 44 years as State Geologist he missed only one annual meeting. On my way home from AASG in Portland, Retha and I stopped to visit Bill at his daughter's home in Philadelphia. Bill died two weeks later. I gave him his last update on AASG. It was a good visit. He never got to see the notebook of messages from AASG colleagues, but it was presented to his children at his funeral. A note from Don Haney summarizes how we all remember Bill - it read, *"Bill, tonight at the banquet we laughed a little. but we will never again laugh the way we did when you were Culture Chairman. We love you, we miss you, and we wish you God's speed".*

Rest in peace Norman Francis "Bill" Williams.

William V. Bush, State Geologist