

Arthur A. Socolow (1921–2013)

Eighth State Geologist of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

by George Love

Dr. Arthur A. Socolow passed away on March 25, 2013, at his home in Gloucester, Massachusetts. Art, as he was known to his many friends, was born in New York, New York. He received his B.S. in geology from Rutgers University and both his M.S. and Ph.D. from Columbia University. While in graduate school, he worked with the U.S. Geological Survey. After receiving his Ph.D., he began his career as a professor of geology at Southern Methodist University, Boston University, and the University of Massachusetts.

In 1957, Art came to the Survey as an economic geologist. He worked initially under Pennsylvania State Geologist Carlyle Gray and briefly under acting State Geologist Alan Geyer. In 1961, Art was named State Geologist. Although he was already an ardent supporter of the science, he recognized the need for a more aggressive mapping of the existing and potential geologic resources of the Commonwealth. Bituminous and anthracite coal mapping, done in conjunction with the USGS, became a priority. Other items of significance included the rapid dissemination of information and publications directed at the average citizen who wanted to know more about the rocks, minerals, and fossils of the state. Art's view that the practical application of the science be part of any discussion permeated all his efforts, and he did not miss the opportunity to turn a "news-worthy" event into a geologically pertinent discussion. In an early editorial, "Moon Rocks—Earth Rocks," he reflected on the then-momentous moon landing that many of us viewed and then deftly wove the importance of geoscience into the practical impacts the "Earth Rocks" have in our everyday lives.

Art was also an ardent believer that geology, mineral development, and the environment could live side by side, and each could thrive. He wrote numerous editorials pointing out the nexus of geologic effort and sound environmental policy. In August 1970:

The time is now ripe for our geologic researchers to carry their efforts that one giant step further which will relate their sophisticated research efforts and findings to man and his environment. Research geology and environmental geology need not be separate and incompatible.... Environmental geology need not be non-scientific, even as research need not be limited to enumeration of principles and processes.

Art's efforts on behalf of the science of geology were not restricted to the Pennsylvania Survey. He served on numerous advisory committees, including for the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Energy, National Research Council, and the Interstate Oil Compact Commission. In addition, Art was President of the Association of American State Geologists, the Geologic Section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the Association of Stratigraphic Nomenclature.

In 2007, he was named the recipient of the Ian Campbell Medal, a prestigious honor awarded by the Geological Society of America (GSA). He was the 26th recipient of the award given annually in memory of Ian Campbell, a man of remarkable accomplishment and influence. Dr. Socolow's long history of service to the science and profession made him a ready choice.

Art was quoted in *Who's Who in America*: "I have great respect for the individualism of man in the midst of a society and a world where there is an unavoidable interrelationship and interdependence of man upon man and of man upon his environment. While we strive to maintain our individualism, we must share our common resources and our common aspirations. This is the challenge that makes our lives worth living." Art will be missed.

