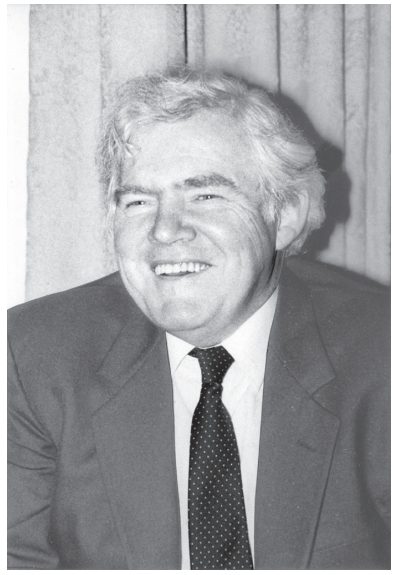
A TRIBUTE TO JERRY CONNOR ON HIS RETIREMENT

This Special Issue contains some of the papers presented at MIT to pay tribute to Professor Jerry Connor of its Civil Engineering Department on the occasion of his retirement after 60 years there. The event was fully reported in Volume 2, Number 4 of this Journal.



Professor Jerry J Connor

The occasion brought together a number of academics and professionals who were profoundly influenced by Jerry's knowledge and personality, whose support was decisive for starting their careers off on the right track, my own included.

In my case, my association with Jerry helped me to clarify and extend the finite element concepts and integral equations mathematical tools that gave rise to the Boundary Element Method.

Professor Herbert Einstein, one of his colleagues at MIT, commented on Jerry's ability to always be ahead of what needs to be solved. He introduced a series of major innovations in research and teaching of Civil Engineering, always keeping in mind the professional relevance of whatever he was teaching. Herbert was grateful to Jerry for his help in reaching tenure at MIT and for his many illuminating discussions. He concluded by describing his contribution in engineering. Jerry, Herbert said, is an engineer's engineer!

Professor Jose Roesset, author of one of the papers in this issue, remembers Jerry's teaching as a breath of fresh air, managing to simplify the most difficult of problems to their fundamentals and applying simple concepts. Jerry, Jose said, is foremost a teacher and a true scholar.

Jerry's influence on Ove Gudmestad, author of another paper in this issue, was decisive in shaping his career in the offshore oil industry. Some topics of Ove's research, including the development of arctic engineering and earthquake effects, arose out of his collaboration with Jerry. More importantly perhaps was the fact that Jerry impressed on Ove the need to carry out research work thoroughly and as a team member.

John Niedzwecki, now Professor at Texas A&M, related how he started work on artificial intelligence under Jerry's guidance. This resulted in John's innovative research on offshore structures instrumentation tools.

Petros Komodromos, now at the University of Cyprus, expressed his appreciation to Jerry for his support during his PhD thesis. He is author of the paper on the Response of Seismically isolated Buildings, a topic he has fully developed in several publications, including a book.

Mauricio Sarrazin, Head of his own Consulting firm and Professor at the University of Chile, referred also to the importance of Jerry in the development of his own career. His paper on the solution of non linear equilibrium problems refers to research also influenced by Jerry.

The last of the papers in this issue is by Professor Simon Laflamme of Iowa State University. On coming to MIT, he was impressed by the way Jerry interacted with his students, particularly those in the Master of Engineering programme which he created and which, every year, included a trip abroad at the end to visit outstanding engineering works.
Jerry's input has had a great impact on several generations of researchers, changing their lives, including my own. A secret of his success has been his ability to listen and respect the opinions of all his colleagues and students. Jerry maintained that students should be treated as equals, instilling in them the confidence that they would require in their future professional lives, just one of the many reasons why so may of us feel indebted to Jerry.

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