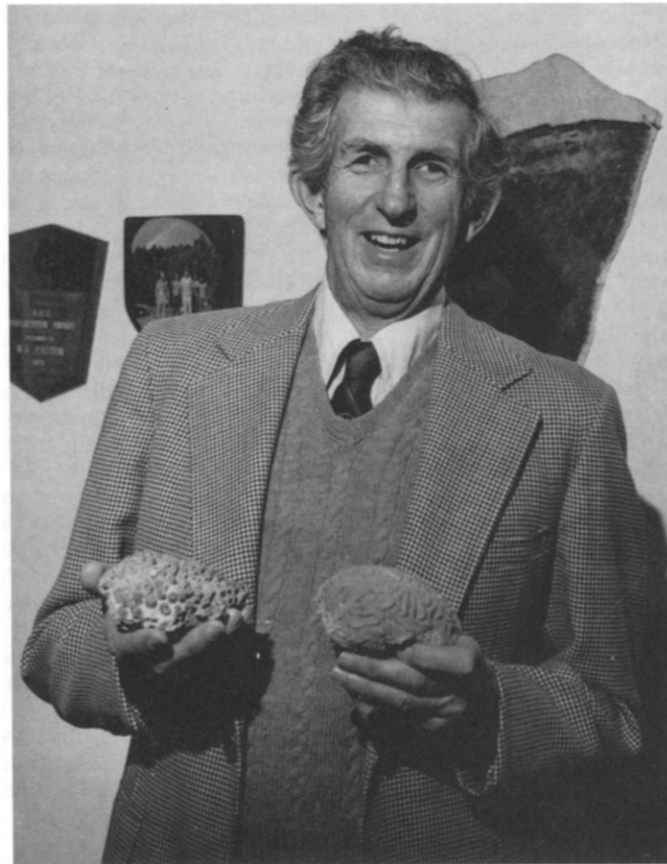


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MEMORIAL

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WILLIAM HEYDEN EASTON

January 14, 1916–July 7, 1996

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Dr. William H. Easton, Professor Emeritus of Geology at the University of Southern California, passed away July 7, 1996. Professor Easton, a Past President of the Paleontological Society, was for many years an active participant in the Society.

William H. Easton was born January 14, 1916 in Indiana, and he attended Bard College and the Corcoran Art Institute in Washington D.C. before completing his undergraduate education in Geology at George Washington University, where he also obtained his MA degree. He was a Fellow at the University of Chicago, where he earned his PhD in Geology in 1941. His first career work was with the Illinois State Geological Survey before his service during World War II as a Lt. Junior Grade in the U.S. Navy in the Pacific theater. Following his return to civilian life he took a faculty position at USC where he spent the rest of his academic career. During that career he worked as a Geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey and as a consultant for energy industry companies during summers.

William Easton served on the faculty of the Department of Geological Sciences for 35 years from 1946 to 1981. During his tenure he progressed from Assistant Professor (1946), to As-

sociate Professor (1948) and to Professor (1951). He was Chairman from 1964 through 1967 and oversaw the inclusion of the Department in the NSF Centers of Excellence program, which moved USC into the path to its present high national standing. As a part of that work he assisted in the fund raising campaign for a new building for the sciences. Under his leadership the department began the growth that led this past year to its rank as 28th nationally.

Dr. Easton contributed much to that growth in recognition by his own productive and honor-filled career. He was a national distinguished lecturer for the American Association of Petroleum Geologists and an emeritus member at his death. He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for study at The British Museum (Natural History); he was President of the Pacific Sections of the Paleontological Society and SEPM, the Society for Sedimentary Geology; Chairman of the Cordilleran Section of the Geological Society of America; President of the Paleontological Society; the first winner of the Raubenheimer Award for Excellence in Science at USC, and was later honored as an Honored Professor Emeritus. Dr. Easton was a Visiting Lecturer

for the American Geological Institute and he was an advisor for the Earth Sciences Curriculum Project, which set the standards for the geology unit in high school curricula nationally. He was the author of a widely used textbook on paleontology, and he was a world authority on Carboniferous fossil corals. His students have worked in academe, industry, and in state and federal geological surveys.

On several occasions he was honored at USC as a fine teacher. His lectures were beautifully prepared, and his enthusiasm was infectious, capturing the interest of many students who then majored in geology and went on to successful careers. He kept in touch with a large number of his students and was always ready to help in job searches and to give advice and counsel.

Dr. Easton's advice was sought locally and nationally as a member and chair of numerous review and advisory panels for funding agencies, national professional societies, and at the university. He was one of the activist group of young professors that energized and reorganized the faculty senate at USC after World War II. He served on most of the standing committees of the University during his tenure at USC.

Illustrative of the breadth of Professor Easton's interests, he was called to serve as interim chair of the Department of French and Italian for a year during a period of reorganization of that department. He served again in 1986–87, coming out of Emeritus status to act until a new chair was appointed. This was in large part due to his life-long interest in French language, culture, and literature. Dr. Easton and his wife Phoebe Jane were active in a host of organizations, including the Los Angeles County

Museum Association, the Save our Coastline Committee of Palos Verdes, the Los Angeles County Art Museum, the USC Library, Westlake Management Committee, and church and social groups. They were interested in art, literature, and rare books, and they travelled to visit and absorb such diverse cultures as those in the South Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand, Europe, and South America.

Easton's scholarly record includes over 100 publications on a wide ranging set of topics in paleontology, engineering geology, modern reef growth and structures, oil and gas exploration, speleology, history of science, sea level change, and the influence of rainfall and earthquakes on landslide activity. He was truly a Renaissance Man in every sense of the word.

He is survived by his wife Phoebe Jane, and his son Robert and daughter Katharine. His friends and colleagues ranged over the whole spectrum of the University's disciplines.

The Department of Earth Sciences at USC has established a Memorial Fund in Professor Easton's name to support students in Paleontology. Friends, colleagues and alumni are invited to send contributions to the fund to Dr. Charles Sammis, Chair of the Department of Earth Sciences, USC, Los Angeles, California 90089-0740.

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