
ENVIRONMENTAL/ENGINEERING GEOLOGISTS

ENVIRONMENTAL/ENGINEERING GEOLOGY DINNER MEETING—

MARCH 29, 1989

CHRISTOPHER C. MATHEWSON—

Biographical Sketch



Christopher C. Mathewson is Professor of Geology, specializing in engineering geology, and director of the Center for Engineering Geosciences at Texas A&M University. Dr. Mathewson received a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Case Institute of Technology in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1963, and his Master of Science and Doctoral degrees in Geological Engineering from the University

of Arizona in 1965 and 1971 respectively. He served as a commissioned officer in the National Ocean Survey from 1965 to 1970, working on ocean charting and marine geophysical surveys in the Pacific and coastal hazards in Hawaii. Dr. Mathewson joined the faculty at Texas A&M in 1971. At Texas A&M, he has conducted research on coastal and river processes, expansive soils mechanisms, urban planning, natural hazard analyses and mitigation, archaeological site preservation and the engineering geology of surface lignite mines. Dr. Mathewson has presented over 175 papers, published over 55 technical papers and is the author of a textbook in Engineering Geology.

Dr. Mathewson is currently the president of the Association of Engineering Geologists. He has served as editor of the *Bulletin of the Association of Engineering Geologists*, and student member coordinator of the Association of Engineering Geologists. He is also chairman of the Engineering Geology Division of the Geological Society of America. Dr. Mathewson received the Claire P. Holdredge Award from the Association of Engineering

Geologists in 1981 and the Faculty Distinguished Achievement Award in Teaching from the Former Students Association of Texas A&M in 1986.

REGISTRATION OF GEOLOGISTS IN TEXAS — IS IT NECESSARY?

The registration of geologists is a complex problem that has created numerous emotional opinions among geologists, especially in the petroleum producing states. As of today, eleven states have some type of registration, three states have certification and three have a legal definition of geology. In 1953, Delaware was the first state to register geologists, followed by Arizona in 1956. The floods and landslides in southern California in the late 1950's provided the public impetus to demand registration of geologists and engineering geologists in California. This occurred in 1968. California, an oil producing state, recognized that there are two practices of geology and therefore established the certification in the specialty of engineering geology.

The legal authority provided to any state to register professionals falls under the state's police power to "protect the health, safety and welfare of the public." No other justification exists for registration. Geologists consider themselves to be scientists with limited impact on the public health, safety and welfare. Many are involved in the advancement of the study of the earth or in the exploration and development of the earth's resources and do not directly impact the public. However, geologists involved in environmental, hydrogeologic and engineering problems have a direct impact on the health, safety and welfare of the public. Registration is therefore needed for some geologists and is not necessary for others. In recognition of this conflict of needs, the Association of Engineering Geologists has been working with the American Institute of Professional Geologists to develop a registration bill for Texas that recognizes and exempts research and resource geologists and registers engineering and environmental geologists and hydrogeologists. In essence, the proposed bill would only require registration of geologists who work directly in the public sector on matters concerning public health, safety and welfare.
