Tuesday, February 10, 2004

Rudy Lechners Grill • Woodlake Square, Gessner at Westheimer
Social 5:30 p.m., Dinner 6:30 p.m.

Cost: $25 Preregistered members; $30 Nonmembers & Walk-ups

Make your reservations now on-line through the HGS website at www.hgs.org; or, by calling 713-463-9476 or by e-mail to Joan@hgs.org (include your name, meeting you are attending, phone number and membership ID#).

Engineering and Environmental Dinner Meeting

by ***Michael D. Campbell***
M. D. Campbell and Associates

Environmental Geoscience and Litigation: Dos and Don'ts, Now or Later

The geoscience profession practiced within either a public or private company can be rewarding and intellectually stimulating, or it can also be frustrating and costly. Flaws in the practice of geoscience can and often do lead to litigation. Certain professional responsibilities go along with practicing within the profession that involve protecting human health and the environment. Beyond that, the methods employed are of paramount importance in avoiding litigation. The methods necessary depend on the level and type of education and training. As a Licensed Geoscientist in the State of Texas, the individual has met certain requirements in formal education and experience but these do not protect the individual or associated company from litigation. First, the individual must have passed through the normal progression of working in the field and gaining increasing experience by first working under the supervision of experienced senior professionals. Having appropriate support personnel available, such as chemists, microbiologists, engineers, and others is mandatory in order to function appropriately in the multidisciplinary environmental field of today. Access and use of relevant technical literature augments professional training and experience. Project scoping, combined with appropriate execution, reporting and documentation are integral features of project management. Minimizing any one function opens the individual or company to errors and omissions. Assessing all relevant data without preference allows for the appropriate evaluation of surface and subsurface conditions. For example, knowledge of the difference between the water table and first water encountered, the nature of how certain industries typically contribute to local contamination of soil and ground water, and the differences involved in whether the individual consultant or company performs as a geoscience consultant or contractor all need to be well considered and understood in practicing geoscience today or there may be litigation in the future. ■

Biographical Sketch

Michael D. Campbell, P.G., P.H. is a graduate of The Ohio State University (geology and hydrogeology) in 1966 and of Rice University (geology) in 1976. He has served Law Engineering, Inc. and ENSR Engineering and Consulting, Inc. as Corporate Consultant and Chief Hydrogeologist in the 1980s. In the early 1990s, he served DuPont Environmental as Regional Technical Manager and Chief Hydrogeologist where he was responsible for five sections: geology, environmental specialties, design engineering, construction engineering, and deep well services. Since the mid-1990s, he has been in private practice as Principal with M. D. Campbell and Associates (http://www.mdcampbell.com), where he has provided senior management and consultation in a range of hydrogeological and associated environmental and mining projects. He also has served as an expert witness on numerous cases in Texas and around the United States In adjunct functions, he has served as Principal Instructor for the Institute of Environmental Technology, and as Principal Hydrogeologist for Environmental Litigation Associates, Houston, Texas (http://www.ela-iet.com).