REMEMBERING MIKE SCULLIN (1932-1995)
ONE OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF GRADING & EXCAVATION ORDINANCES

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Mike Scullin’s Early Years

Mike was born in Danville, Illinois in 1932, where he father was the Director of Public Works. His father died of a heart attack in 1937.

Mike graduated from high school in 1950, and after attending Southern Illinois, enlisted as a Navy Seebee in 1953.
After leaving the Navy in 1956, Mike enrolled in civil engineering at Arizona State in Tempe, under the GI Bill. At end of his junior year he decided to change his major to geology. He did his summer field camp in the Teton Range during the summer of 1958, after completing all his coursework.
Mike landed a job as a grading inspector in 1959.

One Saturday he met a fellow geologist named Slosson, who was fighting with a pair of cat skinners....
Getting Involved

Jim Slosson encouraged Mike to become involved with the development of grading and excavation codes. Mike joined AEG’s Building Codes Committee in 1961, which developed the modern grading code after the storm season of 1961-62. In 1958 the City of Los Angeles began certifying Engineering Geologists, followed soon thereafter by the Counties of Los Angeles (1960), Orange (1962), and Ventura (1963).
Mike joined CAEG in 1959.

This shows Mike’s application to upgrade to full member status in the California Association of Engineering Geologists in July 1963, after he had joined Orange County.
FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

At the January 12th Board meeting all members of your Board of Directors were present. Five committee chairmen attended, and written reports were on hand from the other three committee men. Your representatives in A.E.G. are on the job; if they do not reflect your views, it is possible they have not heard from you.

The Board authorized the expenditure of funds for the legal fees to change our name to A.E.G. on the incorporation papers. Funds were also authorized for our membership in the International Conference of Building Officials. Results of the ballot on adoption of the Code of Ethics were 15 to 1 in favor of adoption.

Ed Zielbauer discussed means of board representation of possible new sections, where geographic location makes the cost of attendance at board meetings prohibitive. Further study will be given this matter, and suggestions from those most affected would be welcomed by Ed.

Bill Gardner reports that presentation of our registration bill to the State Legislature is going ahead as planned. However, we will need to do some missionary work in educating other groups to the need for this legislation. Local committee chairmen are prepared to discuss this with the members at your next section meeting.

Inquiry has been made to A.G.I. as to their requirements for affiliation. Their legal counsel is currently studying our constitution and brochure to determine whether we would qualify for membership under their tax exempt status.

The Board approved the applications of 15 new members, 5 associate members, and one affiliate member; these new members include 7 from Missouri, 2 from Kansas, and one each from Illinois, Texas, Oregon, Washington and Pakistan.

Decisions of the past year are being put into action, our membership is expanding and A.E.G. is moving ahead. Express your opinions on the current issues at your meetings so that those representing you will be informed. We need your active participation in A.E.G. -- but we also need your financial support. So send in your 1963 dues and your registration assessment and save the Treasurer the mailing of second notices.

Burt Marlave
Mike joined the Orange County’s Department of Building and Safety as their first geologist after adoption of their new grading ordinance in January 1963.
The Enforcer

- Mike’s experience as a center on the Southern Illinois football team never hurt him when it came to coercing contractors!
- They had never been subject to regulations previously
ASCE Daniel W. Mead Award

- Mike’s first professional paper was “Urban Hillside Development Under Government Agency Control” for meeting of the Spoil Mechanics Group of the Los Angeles Section of ASCE in April 1964.

URBAN HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT UNDER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY CONTROL

(Submitted to the Soils Mechanics Group of the American Society of Civil Engineers, May 15, 1963 - Suite 3333 - Biltmore Hotel, 5th and Olive Streets, Los Angeles, California and The Daniel W. Mead award presented to the Los Angeles Section, ASCE, April 6, 1964.)

INTRODUCTION
Soils engineering and geological considerations relative to the establishment and maintenance of building sites and the locations of geologically hazardous areas in the foothills and mountains are of the utmost importance. Until recently, most of the land used for residences has been relatively free of damage from existing or potential soils engineering and geological hazards; however, the increasing demand for building sites has accelerated and will continue to accelerate the development of the available foothill and mountain slopes for residential living. On much of this terrain, geological hazards are inherent and their effects have to be neutralized or eliminated if extensive damage to public and private property is to be avoided. Therefore, it is essential, in the interest of public safety and welfare, that the governmental agency secures and utilizes the information and data provided by soils engineers and geologists regarding those natural factors necessary to insure sound development, and incorporate requirements for soils engineering and geological investigations and control into its procedures, policies and laws.

This paper has been compiled to review current regulations pertaining to hillside development and the responsibilities and qualifications of the professional people who control this development.

CURRENT REGULATIONS
The Orange County ordinance is the result of six months of bi-weekly meetings conducted from January through June of 1962 by 27 Soils
During the early 1960s Mike worked hard in the cooperative effort to get Appendix Chapter 70-Excavation and Grading added to the Uniform Building Code.

It was officially adopted in 1964.
• A couple of candid shots from the 1966 and 1967 ASCE Beer Busts in Santa Ana

• Note mud on Mike’s shoes
The late 60s

- As the 60s drew to a close, grading codes became increasingly strict, with the 1967 UBC employing 2:1 cut and fill slopes.
- As a consequence, morals relaxed, skirts lifted, and haircuts became less frequent.
During Mike’s tenure as Orange County Geologist they developed the most comprehensive excavation and grading code in the nation.
During his last few years with Orange County Mike developed an enviable reputation as a grading department supervisor and his published articles were without peer.

In 1967 he became a CPG through AIPG and began smoking a pipe, shown at right.
• Mike started getting offers to work in the private sector. In August 1968, he joined Geolabs and became their Orange County office manager.

• In Sept. 1970 they sent him to Washington, DC to open a new office.

At the Lincoln Memorial in September 1970. No more crew cuts.
Geology Registration at last!

- The California Board of Registration for Geologists and Geophysicists was finally established by statute in 1969, after 7 years of lobbying.
- Mike became RG 283 when the first certificates were issued in Sept 1970.
In February 1971 Mike returned to southern California and found a job with his old mentor, Jim Slosson.

Having gone through a painful divorce he shared an apartment with another bachelor and the two started dating different ladies.
Mike shifted to Leighton & Associates in Orange County between Nov 1972 and Oct 1974 to be closer to his three sons, who were living in Orange County.
From October 1974 to May 1983 Mike was self-employed, working out of his homes in Canoga Park and, later, Thousand Oaks.

One of the soils engineers he worked with frequently was David Hsu, shown at lower left.
Between 1974-83 Mike worked on some challenging projects, besides meeting and marrying Sandi Strebe, who worked for Geosoi ls in Van Nuys. They blended their respective families and raised five children together.
One of Mike’s dreams was to complete his master’s degree and write the quintessential text on grading and excavation codes.
The Bible of Grading (1983)

Mike was Vice President and Chief Engineering Geologist of Robert Stone & Associates in Van Nuys between May 1983 and February 1990.
Mike directing trenching of the Malibu Coast Fault (at left) and on a Dibblee Foundation field trip (below)
Mike called them his “Bonus years”

- Mike and Sandi at his son Greg’s wedding (above) and at Tai-kwon-do practice; after massive heart attack in 1987
Mike spent his last five years at Rogers/Pacific; teaching grading courses with Dave Rogers for ICBO, ABAG, and the City of Los Angeles.
Mike had an impressive array of images showing grading operations.

Slope treatment details

Scrapers double dumping fill – a real Bozo No-No
He also had some great drawings that he used in his Grading Short Course.
Some of Mike’s visuals on keyways
More examples of graphic standards for grading and excavating from Mike’s grading courses.
Mike’s Do’s and Don’ts of Dip Slopes

- **Ridge Outcrop**
- **Colluvium**
- **Inclination of Bedrock**
- **Strata**

**Structural Control of Slope Form by Underlying Geology**

**Out-of-Slope Dip**

**Daylighted Block Moves Along Geologic Discontinuity into Excavated Area**
In June of 2004 Mike fulfilled a life-long dream when he visited Ireland with two of his three sons. He visited Scullin, where his ancestor Titus Scullin had been born before emigrating to America.
• Mike began life as a fighter, but went out an artist and a lover.
• His favorite joke was about the eloquence of an Irishman.