

July 26, 2013

In Memoriam: Roger C. Wood

Professor Emeritus, UCSB College of Engineering

January 31, 1932 ? July 17, 2013



Roger C. Wood

It is with deepest regret that we announce Roger C. Wood, professor emeritus, passed away peacefully on July 17, 2013, at his home in Santa Barbara. He will be remembered fondly for his friendly personality, his devotion to students, and his tremendous impact on setting the UC Santa Barbara College of Engineering on a projected course that would elevate it to one of the world's top-ranked engineering institutions today.

Professor Wood studied applied mathematics and was in the Air Force ROTC at the University of Minnesota, and earned his PhD in electrical engineering from UCLA. In 1965, Wood joined the faculty of UCSB's then newly formed School of Engineering ? to be established as the College of Engineering the following year in 1966. During his career, he was known for research in computer system modeling, design and analysis, as well as computer architecture. He was Chair of the [Electrical and Computer Engineering](#) department from 1971 ? 1975, and became the College of Engineering's first Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in 1983.

"Dr. Roger Wood was one of the founding fathers of Engineering at UCSB," said Terri Coleman, former Assistant Dean for Student Services for the College of Engineering. "He saw the importance of establishing an independent College of Engineering, ensuring that the developed majors met the standards for accreditation, and faculty recruitment resulted in top researchers and excellent teachers."

Wood was highly instrumental in the early development of the Computer Science department, where he held a joint appointment with Electrical and Computer Engineering. He was an important contributor to the course development that led ultimately to the Computer Engineering program UCSB has today.

"Dr. Wood was clearly a professor who made a difference and whose contributions continue to have a lasting effect on the Computer Engineering and Computer Science programs within the UCSB College of Engineering," commented Steven Butner, professor of electrical and computer engineering.

Butner added, "Anyone who knew and worked with him will tell you that, first and foremost, Roger Wood was a people person. He was outgoing, fun, and likable."

Wood will be particularly remembered for his dedication to students and to a high standard of undergraduate education in engineering at UCSB. He was recognized for his educational leadership and service to engineering students with several awards, including the Mortar Board Professor of the Year Award, UCSB Academic Senate Teaching Award, and UCSB Affiliates Professor of the Year Award.

"He emphasized the quality of undergraduate education. He truly cared about the success of students and mentored them through their degree programs," added Coleman.

Wood served as an advisor and mentor for many of UCSB Engineering's student groups, including student chapters of IEEE, ACM, Eta Kappa Nu, and Tau Beta Pi. He also served as academic advisor to the Off-Campus Studies Program, assisting engineers in the field to further their education with graduate degrees. He coordinated the Internship in Industry courses, helping students find positions with local companies to give them real-world experience as part of their degree programs.



Roger Wood poses with his family after the 2009 Intramural Hall of Fame ceremony. Pictured, from left: his wife Ann Wood, Roger Wood, and daughter Jenny Hawkes.

"Roger had a great sense of humor and a story for every occasion," said Gene Lucas, UCSB Executive Vice Chancellor. "He was completely invested in education, and was one of the students' favorite professors. He gave his all to UC Santa Barbara."

Eric Sonquist, CFO of the UC Santa Barbara Foundation and friend of the Wood family, shared, "another side of Roger is that he was an avid basketball player" as well as a floor hockey player "who, for several decades, played intramural sports through the UCSB Recreation Center. In 2009, Roger was inducted into the UCSB Intramural Hall of Fame for his longstanding participation in and support of the program. To date, only a small number of people can claim that same honor.

?Roger was known for riding his bike to work and playing basketball at noon time. He also organized and played on the ECE/CS intramural floor hockey team,? said Richard Kemmerer, computer science professor. ?I will miss Roger?s pleasant smile and hello.?

Wood?s legacy to students also lives on in the form of the Hynes-Wood Award. In 1986, the UCSB College of Engineering established the Hynes-Wood Award in honor of Dr. Wood and Dr. Jacqueline Hynes, former Assistant Dean for Academic Programs. The award is given in recognition of outstanding contributions to student activities in the College of Engineering, and for those who demonstrate an extraordinary commitment to the professional growth and development of students in the College of Engineering.

?Professor Wood was a fixture in the College of Engineering for long after he officially retired,? explained Glenn Beltz, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies for the College of Engineering. ?He was always very engaged with the Engineering community and committed to our students and the success of our academic programs.?

In 2009, the UCSB department of Electrical and Computer Engineering published a [?Profiles of Distinction? interview with Roger Wood](#) in their annual newsletter *Current*. In the interview, Wood said of his passion for teaching and mentoring students: ?Respect other people. Pay attention. Figure out what they need, what is important. One of the great rewards is seeing the light bulb go on when someone is stumbling around with something. It?s extremely gratifying as a teacher to help them through something that is difficult.?

For Terri Coleman, who worked alongside Wood during her three decades of service to the College of Engineering, Wood was a mentor and friend. ?He always had a smile on his face, a story to tell, and time for another student who was looking for guidance,? she recalled.

?He will be missed.?

Dr. Roger Wood is survived by his wife, Ann, four children, twelve grandchildren, and one great-grandchild (expected). A celebration of Dr. Roger Wood?s life will be held on Saturday, August 31 at 2:00 p.m. at the [Unitarian Society, 1535 Santa Barbara Street](#) in Santa Barbara.

Individuals who would like to share personal remembrances or photos are encouraged to post online at <http://www.wrhsb.com/obituaries/Roger-Wood/>.

In lieu of flowers, his family requests support for The Roger C. Wood Endowment at UCSB; proceeds support College of Engineering undergraduate education (<https://www.giveucsb.com/ece.htm>).

Images



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