

# USGS RETIREES

NEWSLETTER No. 204

August 2024

*An organization of retirees of the U.S. Geological Survey, whose purpose is to keep its members in touch with each other and their former agency.*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Hello, fellow USGS Retirees.*

It has already been a hot summer and your Board of Directors, the newsletter staff, and several volunteers have been busy sweating the details for you and the USGS Retirees' Organization. Our organization exists to help us maintain contact with former colleagues and with the USGS. Towards that last part, Vice-President, Phil Turnipseed, Secretary, Kate Flynn, and Treasurer, Cathy Hill, and I met last month with USGS Director Dave Applegate and separately, with the new Associate Director for the Natural Hazards Mission Area, Mike Grimm, to discuss the accomplishments and aspirations of the USGS Retirees Organization. Dave is very familiar with our group, regularly reads our newsletter, and is excited about our efforts to connect with early and late career USGS employees, particularly our scholarship awardees. We discussed opportunities for an article about the Organization in the USGS "Need to Know" weekly internal newsletter, the value of a possible MOU between us, and introductions to other USGS leaders. Being new, Mike knew less about us, but also pledged to help. He and his chief of staff, Gary Latzke, recently connected us with USGS experts in IT modernization, social media, and outreach—areas in which the Board recognizes the Organization needs to be more effective. The officers plan to meet with other USGS leaders this summer, particularly Bill Werkheiser, the former (and returning) Associate Director for the Water Mission Area.

In other news, Bob Swanson, our Central Region Representative, attended the USGS National Water Data Training Workshop in St. Louis in July. Bob staffed a booth and gave presentations about the importance of retaining and building a sense of prospective, discovery, and service as USGS employees approach and plan for the transition from work into retirement. In addition, Rick Treece will give a presentation promoting the Retiree's Organization at the USGS Data Chiefs meeting in Tuscaloosa, AL, in November. The Retirees are on the march!

We continue to plan for the 2025 Reunion in Tuscaloosa. Rick Treece and his planning committee are laying the groundwork for a terrific event. Make sure now that it is on your calendar (September 30 – October 2, 2025). We want to see you there!

Perhaps our most important news concerns our USGS Retirees Scholarship Program. We are thrilled to announce the recipients of this year's scholarships. You can read more about them in the pages that follow. These scholarships are important personal boosts in the careers of these young people and a long-term talent boost for the USGS.

Related to the scholarships, we have some sad news. As reported in the memorials section of this newsletter, Jim Blakey, former Central Region hydrologist, water-quality expert, friend and mentor to many, has passed away. Jim served as the president of our organization from 2004-05 and was an active and principal advocate for the establishment of the USGS Retirees Scholarship Program. As you reflect on Jim's passing, perhaps you might consider offering a special gift to the scholarship fund in honor of Jim's service.

Goodbye and don't let the summer pass without reaching out to an old USGS friend.

*Take Care! --Robert*

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### \*\*\* Mark Your Calendars \*\*\*

**Next USGS Retirees' Reunion, September 30 to October 2, 2025,  
at the new USGS Hydrologic Instrumentation Facility  
Tuscaloosa, Alabama**



*Consider an opportunity to see  
some unique baseball history  
before or after the reunion:*

For those attending the 2025 Retirees' Reunion in Tuscaloosa, AL, a historic landmark worth visiting is only about an hour away in Birmingham. If you're a sports fan, particularly a baseball fan that loves the history of the game, a visit to Historic Rickwood Field is a must-see. The park is open for self-guided tours and admission is free. Rickwood Field is the oldest existing

professional baseball park in the United States, built in 1910. On June 20, 2024, the first major league baseball game was played in the State of Alabama at Rickwood Field. The St. Louis Cardinals defeated the San Francisco Giants on a night that was set aside as a celebration to commemorate the Negro Leagues. Many former players that played in both the Negro Leagues and Major Leagues were recognized and honored. Willie Mays played his first game as a pro there with the Birmingham Black Barons in 1948. Mays grew up only about five miles from the stadium. Unfortunately, Mays passed away at the age of 93 on June 18, 2024, only two days prior to the celebration. Mays is considered by many



as the greatest all-around player the game has ever seen. As Joe Goodman writes, "Willie Mays has been promoted to a seat high above Rickwood Field for the historic game that's being played in his honor. The fateful timing is extraordinary if not divine." With the passing of Mays, Rickwood Field is now a cathedral to celebrate the life of baseball's greatest player.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willie\\_Mays](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willie_Mays)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rickwood\\_Field](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rickwood_Field)

## USGS RETIREES SCHOLARSHIPS 2024

On March 20, 2024, the USGS Retirees' Organization announced the winners of its 2024 Scholarship Program. They are:

- Jacob Fagerstrom, Upper Midwest Water Science Center, Lansing, MI, attending Mott Community College, Flint, MI
- James Mitsuka, New Mexico Water Science Center, Albuquerque, NM, attending Central New Mexico Community College, Albuquerque, NM
- L. Kirsten Oberg, Central Midwest Water Science Center, Urbana, IL, attending Parkland College, Champagne, IL
- Megan Schmer, California Water Science Center in San Diego, CA, attending San Diego City College, San Diego, CA

*"The USGS Retirees' Scholarship Program has been a great success over the years and this year was exceptional. We are so pleased to award almost \$5,000 to the 4 winners in 2024," said Robert Mason, President of the USGS Retirees' Organization. "This program has been amazing over the last 19 years, and we hope it will continue to grow and give educational opportunities to career scientists and engineers in the USGS."*

The program, sponsored wholly by the USGS Retirees' Organization, has been in place since 2006 and has awarded almost \$100,000 to 51 aspiring students who work for the USGS across the Nation. To learn more about the USGS Retirees' Organization and the associated Scholarship Program visit <http://wrcretirees.org/scholarships.htm> or contact D. Phil Turnipseed (Phil.Turnipseed@gmail.com) for more information.

### 2024 Award Recipients



***Jacob Faberstrom (left) receiving his scholarship from his supervisor Derrick Hubbell (right).***

**Congratulations to Jacob Faberstrom, Upper Midwest Water Science Center, Lansing, MI, recipient of a \$1,400 USGS Retirees Scholarship.** Jacob is currently attending Mott Community College in Flint, MI. He plans to take courses in Integral and Differential Calculus along with 6 hours of Physics to meet requirements to qualify as a hydrologist. Jacob transferred from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the USGS in September 2022. He is a hydrologic

technician, who currently splits his time between USGS Detroit Surface Water streamgages and continuous and discrete water quality sites under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. He is also responsible for maintaining numerous groundwater wells throughout the State of Michigan. Since starting at the USGS, he has taken part in various training courses on basic electronics, ADCP measurements, Global Navigation Survey System classes, and Aquarius for water quality samples. He is currently using all these before mentioned skills regularly. In addition, Jacob is learning how to program loggers, set up gaging stations, and manage decoding satellite data from streamgages. The diverse array of opportunities has fueled his enthusiasm to continue working with the USGS.



**Jacob writes:** *When I was studying aquatic ecology in college, I was immediately drawn to the USGS. The agency's research and data-driven environment aligns closely with my interest in monitoring and researching aquatic ecosystems. I find it deeply fulfilling to have a career that helps make a meaningful difference in people's lives and the environment, which the USGS offers. The commitment to scientific excellence keeps me motivated to continue here, gaining hands-on education, and refining my technical skills while contributing to projects I am truly passionate about. I look forward to continuing my journey at the USGS for years to come.*



**James Misutka proudly displaying his scholarship.**

**Congratulations to James Misutka, New Mexico Water Science Center, Albuquerque Field Office, recipient of a \$1,500 USGS Retirees Scholarship.** James has been working with the Albuquerque Field Office in the Surface Water data section since October 2022. His duties include routine site visits and maintenance at streamgaging stations throughout the State in addition to creating, analyzing, approving, and auditing records for all of the Albuquerque Field Office's associated stations. Site visits include making discharge measurements, tracking changes in features such as the flow control, Gage Height at Zero Flow, and vertical datums throughout the site. Other work includes maintenance of crest stage gages, precipitation gages, and water

quality parameters at various gages. James is currently attending Central New Mexico Community College in Albuquerque, NM. He plans to take a 3-hour credit course in Calculus along with 6 hours of Physics to meet requirements to qualify as a hydrologist.

**James writes:** *I see the value and appreciate the quality of scientific work this agency provides for the public. I want to continue working for the USGS because this agency stands for and holds up to the same scientific integrity to which I hold myself. I believe I can grow my career with the USGS and the USGS can benefit from my contributions.*



**Kristen Oberg receiving her scholarship.**

**L to R: Gary Johnson, Director of Networks; Kirsten Oberg; Jon Nania, Acting Center Director; and Ryan Beaulin, Urbana Field Office Chief; all from the Central Midwest Water Science Center.**

**Congratulations to L. Kirsten Oberg, Central Midwest Water Science Center, Urbana Field Office, recipient of a \$1,175 USGS Retirees Scholarship.** Kirsten started as a student in November 2020. Her current duties include

maintaining and monitoring 17 Surface Water streamgages and 1 Groundwater site. She has responsibility for analyzing, approving, and auditing the records for these sites. This past year she began building rating curves for some new and old streamgages. In addition to her regular duties, Kristen is assisting with the testing of hydroacoustic instruments. She is collecting data for new measurement methods such as dynamic selection of exposure time of mid-section measurements. Kirsten will be attending Parkland College in Champagne, IL, in the fall 2024 to take courses in Engineering Mechanics, Electricity and Magnetism, and Differential Equations and Introductory Matrix Theory. These will supplement her bachelor's degree in Environmental Systems Management (completed December 2020) so that she may qualify for conversion to a hydrologist.

**Kristen writes:** Working as a Hydrologic Technician has given me a great foundation for understanding the significance of collecting quality data. I want to continue working for the USGS because it promotes an exceptional workplace culture and a high level of professionalism while conducting interesting research. I would like to contribute more by doing research focused on water use/quality because understanding current issues will make us more prepared to navigate challenges that may arise in the future.



**Megan Schmer proudly displaying her scholarship.**

**Congratulations to Megan Schmer, San Diego Field Office, California Water Science Center, recipient of a \$414 USGS Retirees Scholarship.** Megan has worked for the USGS for almost 11 years. Her current work is in the collection of continuous water-quality data, including records processing for parameters collected (i.e., Specific Conductance, pH, Temperature, Dissolved Oxygen, and turbidity). She also is involved in discrete water quality sampling for the California Oil Gas and Groundwater (COGG) project. Work for COGG also includes drafting data releases and working in QW Data analysis. Megan currently is a student at San Diego City College in San Diego, CA, and will continue in the fall 2024 by taking Physics, which will complete her requirement to qualify for a hydrologist position.

**Megan writes:** I look forward to one day writing analytical reports and possibly becoming a project lead for the USGS. Working for the USGS in particular is so important to me because the data that we collect and work that we publish is all impartial. We have no agenda, and that's what sets us apart from so many other environmental agencies.

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**Bob Swanson represented the USGS Retirees Organization at the USGS 2024 National Water Data Training Workshop in St. Louis, MO, July 16-18. He gave presentations on retirement preparation, the Organization, and results of the 2024 Scholarship Program. And how about that booth display!**



**MESSAGE FROM USGS DIRECTOR DAVE APPEGATE**  
**May 30, 2024**



I am pleased to announce the selection of Bill Werkheiser as the USGS Associate Director for Water Resources.

Bill has been serving as the Department's Senior Science Advisor and Scientific Integrity Officer for the past five years. Before being assigned to the Department in 2019, he served as the USGS Deputy Director, including more than a year exercising the delegated authority of the USGS Director at the start of the previous administration. Bill has served in numerous regional and national leadership capacities in the USGS, including Associate Director for Water, Eastern Regional Director, and Director of the USGS Pennsylvania Water Science Center. His service to the USGS and the Federal government was recognized with a Presidential Rank Award as a Distinguished Executive. He brings a wealth of experience to this role.

Bill takes the reins at a time when our Water Mission Area is making significant progress in meeting statutory mandates for national-scale water resource information products and innovating new tools and technologies. I am confident that Bill can build on this forward momentum in an inclusive manner with a commitment to the role that targeted research plays in ensuring our future relevance and a commitment to delivering the nationally consistent services that are vital to the health of the broader USGS water enterprise spread across the landscape.

Having risen through the ranks and led at both the science center and regional levels, Bill understands the Water enterprise better than anyone. From his time leading the USGS and serving the Department, Bill brings a broad perspective and a demonstrated commitment to collaboration across the bureau and with our wide array of partners. Of particular note, Bill has been working across mission areas and regions to lead a bureau budget initiative focused on developing actionable tools for drought response that is part of the President's Fiscal Year 2025 Request.

I want to thank Joshua Joseph for stepping up to act in the AD role since Don Cline's retirement in March. Joshua has been doing a wonderful job, and I expect him to complete his 120-day assignment on July 7. The transition date has not yet been set, but I expect it to be close to that timeframe.

Please join me in welcoming Bill to this role!

David Applegate  
Director, U.S. Geological Survey



## RETIREMENTS



**Paul Barlow** retired from the USGS New England Water Science Center (WSC) at the end of May 2024 after 41 years with the USGS. Paul was the chief of the Hydrologic Interpretive Branch of the Center since 2020, managing a team of hydrologists who use innovative modeling and statistical and geospatial techniques to analyze water resource issues. Prior to that, he worked as Chief of the Earth Systems Modeling Branch of the Water Mission Area and as a hydrologist for the Office of Groundwater. In Paul's early USGS career, he worked as a hydrologist in the AZ, CA, and New England WSCs. His interests in geology and hydrology grew out of family camping trips to National Parks and State Forests and working with

the Student Conservation Association at Mount Rainier and Olympic National Parks during two summers in high school. Paul's research focused on the connection between groundwater and surface water. He modeled groundwater and surface water flow systems to inform water resource management. Paul also developed simulation-optimization modeling approaches to provide scenarios of groundwater-pumping schedules that minimize the effects of withdrawals on hydrologic systems and aquatic habitats. In 2014, he and the late Stan Leake each received the John Hem Award for Excellence in Science and Engineering from the National Groundwater Association. The Awards were given primarily in recognition of a publication they co-authored, USGS Circular 1376, "Streamflow Depletion by Wells—Understanding and Managing the Effects of Groundwater Pumping on Streamflow." In addition to this work, Paul said he is proudest of the many collaborations and friendships he developed with USGS colleagues, participating in several training classes on groundwater/ surface-water interactions, and writing an article on saltwater intrusion in coastal regions of North America with Eric Reichard. Paul is looking forward to spending more time with his family and enjoying outdoor recreational activities in Rhode Island and across New England.

– **Katrina M. Rossos, Information Specialist, New England WSC**



**Randy Bayless**, the Great Randi as we call him, retired from the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Water Science Center (OKI WSC) after 35 years of Federal service. Randy started in 1989 as a hydrologist working on the Lost River watershed karst flowpath study and an assessment of St. Joseph County project after graduating from Wabash College, from Purdue with a M.S. in Geology/mathematics, and a Ph.D. from Indiana University in Geology/Geochemistry. After years of being a hydrologist, in 2015 Randy was promoted to Research Hydrologist through the RGE and continually upgraded the quality of work for the OKI WSC. His skills made him a natural fit to be the Indiana-Kentucky and OKI WSC GW Specialist from 1994-2022. Over the years, his research interests included active

geochemical systems and environmental impacts of acidic mine drainage and steel slag, testing and applying groundwater flowmeters, contaminant transport in the unsaturated-zone, creating and applying digital well-record databases, PFAS (Polyfluorinated Substances), development and application of high-speed water-monitoring technologies. During his career Randy authored or co-authored more than 50 journal articles, USGS reports, and book chapters. One impactful paper showed pesticides were retained/retarded within the unsaturated zone as part of the National Water Quality Assessment Program. Additionally, he has served as an Adjunct Associate Professor at IU-Purdue University Indianapolis teaching hydrology courses in 1990 and again from 2011-15. This led to a pipeline of quality staff who began working with the OKI WSC after taking his class. He served on multiple committees, statewide and nationally, such as the Unsaturated Zone Interest Group Chairman 2012-14. He also co-founded the Indiana GW Focus Committee, a multi-organizational collaboration of groundwater professionals 2012-present. For all of his contributions to water resource research, Randy received two significant state and national

awards; the DOI Meritorious Service Award in 2018; and the Indiana Water Resources Association's Charles Bechert Award for lifetime achievement. Randy is forever grateful for the support from family, mentoring and assistance from co-workers, and inspiration from his faith for his years with the USGS. *He writes: "The USGS was the perfect job for me because it allowed me to enjoy time alone in the great outdoors with the possibility of leaving the world in a better place when I'm done. Retirement plans focus on family and relaxation, especially with fishing. Thanks for the memories!"* For the OKI WSC we are all happy for Randy in his next phase but know he will be missed. Randy, thank you for all your leadership and science expertise that helped take OKI to the next level. Enjoy the family and fishing!

**- Jeff Frey, Director, OKI WSC**



**Alan Cressler** of the South Atlantic Water Science Center (SAWSC) retired on June 28, 2024, after 37 years of Federal service. Alan was a senior hydrologic technician with the Studies Section in the SAWSC in Georgia and began his career as a legacy employee with the USGS shortly after his father, an accomplished geologist, retired from the USGS. Alan's first position was with an urban hydrology project in the Data Section. Shortly after, he transferred to the Ground Water Information Unit. He focused on many GW projects over the next 14 years, and during that period Alan began assisting with NAWQA Cycle 1 projects. In 2002, Alan accepted a hydrologic technician position with the AZ District in Tucson working on the Lower Colorado River Accounting Service Project. The field component was in the

deserts of eastern California and western Arizona. After three years in the west, Alan returned to the GA District and became part of the Studies Section where he focused on groundwater networks, NAWQA Cycle 2 projects water-quality sampling, and aquatic ecology. From 2005 to present, Alan has led NAWQA (now NWQN) Cycle 3 sampling efforts and related projects in many parts of the country and has been the team lead on many large groundwater sampling networks. He was a team member or team lead on all but one of the national NAWQA Regional Stream Quality Assessment (RSQA) sampling projects. He has also served as a team member on the eDNA Pilot Study in the Upper Colorado River Basin and on the Lake Okeechobee, FL, sediment discharge project over the last several years. Alan is an accomplished photographer, and his photos appear in hundreds of USGS publications and products. His photos also appear in thousands of other publications and media worldwide. Alan has been an active subterranean explorer for most of his life and has visited thousands of caves across the planet documenting passage characteristics, formations, fauna, as well as prehistoric artwork and human-cave usage. On the surface, his interests focus on locating and documenting ferns, rare plants and wildflowers, and aquatic macro-fauna. His lifelong broad personal pursuits of understanding aquatic and terrestrial environments resulted in having a fern (*Dryopteris cressleri*) and a spider (*Nesticus cressleri*) named in his honor for having made their discovery. Alan's commitment to data quality, completeness, preparation, and training set a bar that is difficult to achieve by many. His can-do attitude and friendship in the workplace will be missed the most by his colleagues. Alan is an Atlanta native and will continue to live in the area post-retirement and will continue to travel the world on photographic pursuits. When not traveling, he plans to volunteer his time and talents with The Nature Conservancy, the National Park Service, and Georgia Department of Natural Resources. If you are interested, you can peruse his remarkable photography at:

[https://www.flickr.com/photos/alan\\_cressler/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/alan_cressler/albums).

**-- Vic Engel, Director, SAWSC**





**Karl Davidek** retired on June 28, 2024, after 32 years of service with the USGS. Karl started volunteering with the USGS in Columbus, OH, as a student at Ohio State. After graduation and briefly working as a private consultant, he returned to the USGS in 1993 as a hydrologic technician in Columbus, OH. In 1996, he transferred to the Ukiah Field Office (UFO), USGS California Water Science Center, where he has been a fixture ever since. Throughout his career he has done everything a hydrologic technician can do from groundwater to surface water to water quality to sampling to

sediment collection to gage installation and he has performed all his duties in an exemplary fashion. His leadership, subject matter expertise, calm and steady demeanor, and culinary knowledge will be sorely missed by his coworkers in the UFO. After retirement, Karl intends to stay busy vacationing, attending music festivals, and pursuing new gastronomic delights.

Congratulations on your well-deserved retirement!

--**Andrew Watson, UFO Field Office Chief**



**Jill Frankforter** retired on June 27, 2024. Jill has been such a wonderful asset to the Southwest Region, and it is hard to believe that she has spent 34 years dedicated to the USGS. Her USGS career began as a student in the Nebraska District office in Lincoln, where she was noted for her ability to focus on the things that mattered and to accomplish whatever task or project she was assigned. Her strong background in water quality and stream ecology led her to serve as the lead ecologist on the Central Nebraska Basins National Water Quality Program study, after which, she moved on to a new challenge as the Water Quality Unit Chief in the Studies Section of the Montana Water Science Center. Jill

arrived in Montana just in time to play a key role on a team assigned to stand up a new combined Water Science Center for Wyoming and Montana. Jill's exceptional people skills were critical in that endeavor, and later she accepted the position of Studies Section Chief for the new Center followed by Deputy Center Director. After her stint in Montana, we were extremely fortunate to have Jill accept a job in the Southwest Region as the Director of the Nevada Water Science Center (NVWSC), where she has been serving for the past four years. Directing a science center is a challenge under normal circumstances, but Jill took on that challenge just as the COVID pandemic began. We are so grateful for Jill's commitment to the NVWSC and to USGS. Jill, you have earned the respect and admiration of your colleagues, and we will miss you greatly.

Congratulations on your retirement!

-- **Eric Reichard, Regional Director, Southwest Region**

**Terry Heinert**, Wyoming-Montana Water Science Center (WY-MT WSC) retired in September 2023 after 33 years with the USGS plus 3 years of service with the U.S. Army. After growing up in North Dakota, Terry served in the U.S. Army (1986-1989) working in telecommunications while stationed in Fort Hood, TX, and later in Korea. Afterwards (1989-1992), he attended college in Helena where he received an associate degree in accounting. Terry started his USGS career in October 1990 as a part-time student and he soon began working in the lab full time. He started washing equipment and by 1991 began processing WY-MT sediment samples all the way through 2022. It is estimated that Terry processed over 130,000 sediment samples in his career. The quality of his work was exceptional. He did leave MT for a detail in 1995 to work on USGS drill rigs in Alaska at Fort Yukon, 8 miles above the Arctic Circle. As per Terry "I hadn't worked on a drill rig before. We tripped 200-pound pipe and it was hard 12-hour days. It was a great experience, but dangerous." Starting in 1996, Terry was THE lead field technician for the Clark Fork project where he sampled 21 sites from Butte to Missoula several times a year in all conditions. Over the years, he also worked with the Helena Field Office conducting streamflow measurements, running levels, installing gage houses, and performing cableway and gage house maintenance. He also helped with bridge scour measurements, groundwater projects, and water- quality projects all around the State of Montana. Thank you, Terry, for your commitment to the USGS and to doing things "by the book"!

-- **Wayne Berkas, WY-MT- WSC**



**Sean Lawlor**, Wyoming-Montana Water Science Center (WY-MT WSC), retired March 9, 2024 as a hydrologist with over 38 years of experience with the USGS. Prior to his USGS career, Sean worked summers in construction, the timber industry, commercial fishing in Alaska, and a short stint in the computer industry. Sean completed a B.S. in geology at Dartmouth College where he was a middle-distance runner. Sean began his USGS career in 1986 in NH and VT where he started on a summer drilling crew and quickly transitioned to groundwater aquifer studies with a focus on surface geophysics. Sean transferred to the Helena USGS office in 1996 as a hydrologist to pursue additional geophysical work and was a valuable team member for numerous groundwater and surface

water projects throughout the western states. Sean trained USGS staff on geophysical methods in New England, CA, ID, MT, and at the USGS National Training Center in Denver. He also worked with the State Department to host scientists from the USSR and conducted one of the first trainings in groundwater exploration using nuclear magnetic resonance. Sean was especially sought after for his geology, geomorphology, construction, geophysics, boat operation/maintenance, swift water kayaking, and surveying skills. Sean's common sense and problem-solving abilities in the field were instrumental and highly appreciated in conducting numerous projects. Sean was a critical team member for bathymetric surveys and bridge scour monitoring efforts, notably because of his expertise in the operation of various watercraft. Sean started working on the Wetlands Project in cooperation with the Montana Department of Transportation and continued to act as the project lead until he retired. The last few years of his career, Sean's communication skills and understanding of water rights compacts helped start a multi-year project in cooperation with the Blackfeet Nation. Sean was also a long-time boat operator, wilderness first aid, and swift water safety trainer for the WSC. Sean is now onto his second career as a big-game hunting guide for several months a year in AZ, AK, and MT. In his free time, Sean plans to continue to pursue his passion for all things outdoors (helping with youth soccer, rafting, hiking, skiing, and big-game hunting). As family has always been first in Sean's life, he and his wife Sarah will be frequently traveling to visit their 3 daughters that are spread out from coast to coast (CA, CO, and ME).

**--Korri Duncan, WY-MT WSC**



**Jeff Raffensperger**, hydrologist, Maryland-Delaware-District of Columbia (MD-DE-DC), recently retired. Please join me in congratulating Jeff on his retirement and the numerous scientific contributions he made to the USGS. Jeff has led or collaborated on studies of hydrologic processes, water quality, and modeling. He has been a member of several National Teams working to improve estimation of water budgets, with a research focus on groundwater discharge and base flow to streams and rivers. Jeff received a M.A., and a Ph.D. in Hydrogeology, from The Johns Hopkins University, a M.S. in Geology, Louisiana State University, and a B.S. in Geology (Cum Laude), the University of Maryland. He joined the USGS in 1999 after

teaching at the University of Virginia. Starting as a Supervisory Hydrologist for the Watershed Studies Section, Jeff has worked in several capacities during his time with the MD-DE-DC WSC. He wrote the workplan and managed the DE Inland Bays Hydrological Simulation Program--Fortran (HSPF) model project, co-authored the DE Inland Bays HSPF model report, developed new studies and wrote work plans for the Potomac Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), Mattawoman Creek, and Anacostia River water-quality projects. He then RGE program acting as Project Chief, Chesapeake Bay River Input Monitoring project, 2005-07, managing project resources and data collection at four major river water-quality sites and developing new methods for analyzing and communicating results of load and trend estimation (using ESTIMATOR) to cooperators. In 2006, he became the Center GW specialist, while continuing his scientific work on the NAWQA team, the National Water Budget Estimation and Evaluation (WBEEP) team, and the water budget baseline team. Lastly, during his phased retirement, he has passed along his scientific knowledge and mentored newer staff. He has also continued to lecture at The Johns Hopkins University, and is a key author on a hydrology book, "Elements of Physical Hydrology." We are thankful Jeff has agreed to stay on as an emeritus!

**– Mary Kay Foley, Director, MD-DE-DC WSC**



## NEWS OF RETIREES

**Merilee ('06) and Jim ('05) Bennett write:** We had a great 12-days touring Belgium and Netherlands in April. The Tulips were spectacular in Amsterdam and vicinity. More recently, Jim noticed a report from Colorado University and the National Institute of Standards and Technology that they have constructed a new less inaccurate atomic clock. The clock is 20'x20'x10' and they calculate it will lose only one second in 30 billion years. There appears to be no way to check out that calculation. "I want one of those!"

**Debra Grillo ('19) writes:** Since I retired in 2019, my husband Tony and I have been snowbirds. We spend summers in Graham, WA, and winters in Yuma, AZ. We travel sometimes, but mostly visit our children's families in Austin, TX, and Rosenville, CA. Thank you for continuing on with the newsletter. It is always enjoyable.

**Ivan James ('03) writes:** My new home is about six miles from where I now live and the landscaping and snow removal are taken care of by the homeowner's association. I am still involved with habitat and wildlife policy and politics here in Colorado and was recently appointed by the Governor to the Habitat Stamp Committee. I still get to my farm in Kansas fairly often in the good weather and finished remodeling the kitchen in my Kansas house in December.

**Barb Ryan ('08) writes:** Visits from USGS friends this spring and summer included kayaking on the Imperial River: <https://www.swspotlight.com/articles/community/the-imperial-river-is-a-best-kept-secret/>

Joy Israel DeVries and Pete DeVries (both retired from the Albany Office) when they visited Jim and me in Bonita Springs, FL.



A couple of months later, we kayaked the same River with Zelda Bailey (AZ), Kathy Peter (ID), and Janice Ward (CO). The four of us got together for a few days in Bonita Springs to reminisce about our careers with the Survey, among other things! We also spent a morning with Sarah Hammermeister, USGS Office Chief, Fort Myers, FL, while she was measuring groundwater levels in Bonita Springs.





## TRAVEL NEWS

***Sandy Williamson ('10) shares recent travel with "our 4 kids and 11 grandkids."***



In April 2024 we went with our oldest son and his wife to Thailand. We flew on Delta to Seoul, Korea, and were supposed to change to Korean Airlines for the rest of the trip to Phuket. We arrived with 30 minutes to spare to change planes, but they forced us to delay for 24 hours in Seoul with hotel and cafeteria coupons. We took the fast train to downtown Seoul and walked around. It was the largest subway station I've ever heard of with 9 levels, several more than Washington, D.C., or London.



On to Phuket, the resort island (though it looks like a peninsula) of south Thailand. We stayed at a Hilton on the beach near the airport and rented a car. It was fairly inexpensive and easy to drive

once you got used to being on the right side of the road. Interestingly, there were few gas stations like we are used to because most of the vehicles are small motorbikes and most of the gas stations are gas pumps in the front of someone's house, targeting motorcycles. Debbie and I spent several days driving around seeing beaches and exploring the area, including the NE side of the island where there was a very large marina with probably 15 over 40-ft charter catamaran sailboats and some giant yachts over 100 ft. We also spent one day flying to northern Thailand (2-hour flight), visiting missionaries we've known for a long time, who live in Chang Mai. Because we happened to be there for Thailand's New Year's celebration (Year 2567), which includes a country-wide water fight, they had 5 big water guns ready for the water festival at the end of the week. We also visited a small elephant sanctuary in the country where we got to have a short ride on an elephant as well as feeding them... fascinating.



Back to Phuket, the four of us took a day boat cruise to four different islands that appear to be limestone with vertical cliffs and caves, one of which at the water level went all the way through the island about 100 yards long and the Island was probably 200-ft tall and 1/4 mile long. They paddled us through a natural cave/tunnel in a kayak.



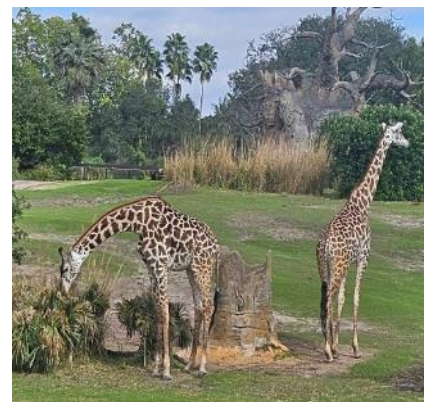
We also went to what's called James Bond Island because of a scene from a 1974 movie with this Rock pillar. The boat trip had four stops for snorkeling, with drinks and lunch provided. While the girls had spa time, Nate and I also went to a local elephant sanctuary. Fascinating. We got to feed them and wash them in a lagoon.

The highlight of the trip was the water festival. We were driving what Google said would be a 1-hour trip to a show. The trip took 3 hours because of the nationwide water fight. We had two big water guns in the backseat and would put the window down a little to water dowsed people and then try to put it back up quickly before they dowsed us back. Every store of the hundreds we went by had several water guns and commonly a trash can full of water with pots and pans to throw it and(or) a hose. Twice, people with a hose filled up our water guns and gave them back to us—surprising to me. Because it's predominantly motor scooters for getting around, they all had two people on them with the back person with a water gun. Everyone got soaked. It was so fun. I would highly recommend a trip to Thailand. The 13 + 6-hour flights were more tolerable than I expected as I watched 6 movies on the first flight making the time go by. P.S. We are 71 and I'm in the early stages of Parkinson's, so some limitations, mostly fatigue.



Disney World at 2024 New Year's with our daughter's family including their two kids 9 and 10. We spent a day each at Magic and Animal Kingdoms, day three was a rest day for we seniors and the final day at Universal Studios. Due to my limitations, we rented a scooter at each park. This scooter became a great place to stash everyone's coats in the afternoon. One surprising note is that I had to have someone from our party in front of me in the scooter or I would fall behind even though the scooter could go 4 mph, people would cut me off and make me slow down. I still walked 10,000 steps/day getting to and from places while the others walked 22,000 steps/day. We used the FastPass which is well worth it to skip lines, but you could only have two reservations at a time. Turns out Magic Kingdom is almost identical in layout and composition to Disneyland in LA--just roomier. The highlights for me were the bus ride through the Animal Kingdom Safari area seeing most of the big animals of Africa and the Avatar

ride. Universal Studios has a lot of amazing rides, all themed, which we generally watched the kids do. Their version of FastPass was expensive, but it takes you right to the front of the line every ride, so you could ride four days' worth of rides in one day. Our daughter found a hotel, Loews Royal Pacific Resort at Universal, that was more expensive but included the FastPass upgrade so ended up being cheaper overall. It was right on the lagoon shuttle that took you to the shopping and restaurant area and entrance to the park.



In August we plan on driving 5-6 weeks in our SUV towing our little A-frame pop-up camper with a shower. We'll be heading east across the continent through Canada, see some fall colors down the East Coast, Mammoth caves, KY, and then head home (maybe seeing some grandkids on the way in Omaha and Phoenix).

## USGS Retiree helps write National Academies of Science report on Modernizing Estimation of Probable Maximum Precipitation June 2024

For more than 75 years, high-hazard structures in the United States, including dams and nuclear power plants, have been engineered to withstand floods resulting from the most unlikely but possible precipitation, termed Probable Maximum Precipitation (PMP). Flood-caused failure of any one of the more than 16,000 high-hazard dams and 50 nuclear power plants in the United States could result in the loss of life and impose significant economic losses and widespread environmental damage, especially under the pressures of climate change. While PMP estimates have provided useful guidance for designing critical infrastructure, weaknesses in the scientific foundations of PMP, especially in an era of rapid climate change, combined with advances in understanding, observing, and modeling extreme storms, call for fundamental changes to the definition of PMP and the methods used to estimate it.

Congress, as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, mandated that the National Academy of Sciences convene a committee of experts to review PMP estimation practices and develop recommendations for modernizing them. The committee recently completed its report:

<https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/27460/modernizing-probable-maximum-precipitation-estimation>  
with a short, 4-page summary:

[https://nap.nationalacademies.org/resource/27460/Report\\_Highlights\\_Modernizing\\_PMP\\_Estimation.pdf](https://nap.nationalacademies.org/resource/27460/Report_Highlights_Modernizing_PMP_Estimation.pdf)

The report recommends a new definition of the PMP as a statistical parameter referenced to specific climate conditions and presents a vision for an estimation methodology based on use on reanalysis of Doppler radar datasets and advanced climate and storm modeling. Our very own Robert Mason, current president of the USGS Retirees' Organization, served on the committee and was one of the co-authors of the report.

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### Reminder to be Careful with Phishers!

The Retirees and at least one member received the message below that appears to be from one of our members. This is not a legitimate message. The email appears to come from the member's email account and the mailing address is correct. The phone number is similar, but not correct. The sender is phishing and hopes you will call, at which point you most likely will be asked to send money. **Don't do it.**

#### Phishing email:

Greetings,

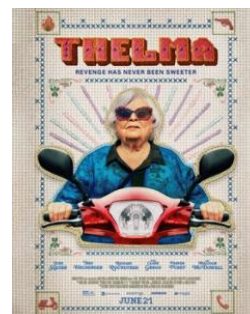
I hope you are good? Please I need a favor from you.

I'd appreciate it if you could email me back when you get this.?

Kind regards,

Instead, we suggest you check out the recently released film Thelma about a 93-year-old grandmother who loses \$10,000 to a con artist. With the help of a friend (Richard Roundtree's last picture) she sets out to get it back

[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/thelma\\_2024](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/thelma_2024)





## MEETINGS AND GATHERINGS

### GEORGIA RETIREES

Georgia Water Science Center alumni and friends gather at the Gwinnett Stripers (Atlanta Braves farm team) game on April 17, 2024.



Right to left. Front row: Ed Martin and wife Diane, Bonnie Turcott and husband Brian; 2nd row: John Clarke and wife Karen, Dale Schultz Masters; 3rd row: Daryl and Ruth Voutila (friends); Lorna Wilson Perlman.

### MARYLAND WATER SCIENCE CENTER PICNIC

Maryland retirees gathered on May 22, 2024, for a spring picnic and to celebrate Herb Freiberger's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.



Back row: Jim Gerhart, Jim Peters, John Brakebill, Cathy Hill, Bob Hirsch, Doug Yeskis, Mike Langland, Dan Phelan, Jim Manning, Pat Leitman, Fred Tenbus. Middle row: Roselyn Fisher, Nancy Gerhart, Herb Freiberger, Bob Shedlock, Steve Curtin, Shirley Hartsoe, Nancy Pentz, Bob Pentz. Front row: Gary Fisher, Linda Phillips, Scott Phillips, Ed Doheny, Nina Yeskis, Jon Dillow.

## MISSOURI RETIREES PICNIC

Twenty-five people attended the Missouri District Retirees annual picnic on June 3, 2024. It was hosted by Leon and Nelda Reed at their lake near Rolla. Honored attendee Horace "Jeff" Jeffery, 98-years old, was at Gold Beach on D-Day in WWII, and was the Assistant District Chief in Missouri when he retired in 1986. Everyone had a great time.



Left to right, seated: Jeff Jeffery, Dale Blevins, Loyd Waite, Evelyn Waite  
Standing: Jim Barks, Patti Barks, Teresa Mugel, Cheryl Barks, Doug Mugel, Shane Barks, Tom Mesko, Pam Keeney, Joe Richards, Sherry Ternes, Barb Wessner, Jeff Imes, Treva Imes, Carol Ellingson, Steve Brady, Henry Hauck, Mike Kleeshculte, Marlene Kleeschulte, Nelda Reed, Leon Reed

## MONTANA RETIREES

Generally, every Wednesday morning, the USGS retirees in Helena, MT, meet for coffee at the Great Harvest Bread shop. On May 30, 2024, we were fortunate to have 12 retirees attend.



Left to right, standing - John Lambing, Wayne Berkas, Terry Heinert, Bill Stotts, Andy Skerda, Steve Lynn, and Mike Cannon. Left to right, sitting - Bob Omang, Jim Hull, Pat Ladd, Ron Shields, and Phil Karper.



## NEBRASKA RETIREES

Greetings from the Nebraska retiree's breakfast bunch! We've had a lot of people traveling and sparse attendance the last few months, but we managed to get together in June and had a great time.



Left to right: Bob Swanson, Merle and Mary Jo Schlotfeld, Joanne and Glenn Engel, Judy Boohar.

## RESTON RETIREES



Reston Retirees met May 6, 2024, at the USGS for a sack lunch talk by Rama Kotra, Scientist Emeritus. The talk was based on the book *Keep Sharp* by Dr. Sanjay Gupta. Dr. Gupta is a neurosurgeon and the Chief Medical Correspondent for CNN. The words by Bill Gates on the book jacket state, "This is a frontier where we can dramatically improve human life, and *Keep Sharp* is a helpful primer for anyone who wants to better understand brain function and how to preserve it." Dr. Gupta draws on cutting-edge research from his travels around the world, engaging with scientists discovering the secrets to cognitive longevity. *Keep Sharp* may change how you think about your brain, how you care for it, and how you support its full potential.



**Reston Retirees moved back outside this summer  
at Temporary Road Park in Reston.**

June 3 (top two photos) the group exchanged casual conversation. There was a fair bit of reminiscing and maybe a tall tale or two. (Or, who knows, maybe it was all true?) We met again on July 1 (bottom photo) for more of the same. We will be back in the park on August 5.



## MEMORIALS



**James F. 'Jim' Blakey, 91**, our friend and mentor passed away on June 2, 2024. Jim was born to George T. and Lois Lee Blakey in Whitewright, TX, on October 6, 1932. He attended Sherman High School, graduating in 1951. He attended and graduated from East Texas State University (now part of Texas A&M University-Commerce, TX) where he majored in chemistry. He graduated in 1955. He was a lifelong fan of the Texas Longhorns. Jim and his future wife, Paula (nee: Johnston), met in high school and reconnected in college in their junior year. They were married on July 24, 1955, and celebrated 68 years together. Before graduating, while looking for a job, Jim happened to run into Herman Feltz, his high school chemistry teacher; Herman suggested he contact the USGS. Upon graduation, Jim joined the USGS in the Texas district where he conducted numerous water-quality studies in surface and groundwater over the years. He moved to the QW Branch Headquarters in 1966 and then back to Texas. He became Chief of the Ohio District in 1974. In 1976, the Blakeys moved to Denver where Jim was named the Program Officer. He was named Chief of the Colorado District succeeding Jim Biesecker in 1978 and returned to the Central Region as Regional Hydrologist in 1986. He was awarded the Department of the Interior's Meritorious Service Award in 1984 and in 1989 he received the Department's highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award, presented by the Secretary of the Interior. Jim retired in 1995 and joined the WRD [USGS] Retirees organization. He served as the WRD [USGS] Retirees' President for one term 2004-2005. He was active in establishing the ongoing USGS Retirees Scholarship Program, serving as Chairperson on the selection committee for about 10 years. In 2010, he served as the chairperson for the 2010 Retirees Reunion in Denver, CO. During the reunion, Jim was awarded the WRD Retirees' Lifetime Award (now known as the George Ferguson Award) for his dedication and ongoing support to the Retirees' organization. Jim is survived by his wife Paula, 3 daughters and 1 son; 10 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren; and a sister. Jim was preceded in death by his parents, and a brother. A celebration of Jim's life was hosted by his family and was held on July 28, 2024, at Bear Creek Park, Lakewood, CO. In honor of Jim, the family suggests supporting the USGS Retirees Scholarship Fund, USGS Retirees, P.O. Box 280, Herndon, VA 20172-0280 (**Please annotate the check: Scholarship Fund/Blakey**) or to the American Cancer Society.

**Merilee Bennett writes:** When I retired, Jim "volunteered" me for several activities – first as the Central Region Editor for the retirees' newsletter, then as the Newsletter Layout Editor, and then as a volunteer for the 2010 National Retirees' Reunion held here in Denver. I knew Jim best after I retired as a friend and mentor. The example he set for continuing support of the Denver area retirees – checking on those people who were ill at home or in the hospital visiting or calling them for an up-date, attending funeral services, or just checking in if they were out of touch. I know this because after my knee replacement and was in rehab for 2 ½ weeks he and Paula came and visited me. To those who knew him better than me, this was always a personal touch that they appreciated.

**Dick Engberg writes:** Jim was a good friend and a great boss. He selected me for the District Chief's job in Iowa in 1986 and let me run that District as I saw fit without interference. That said, he was always there if I needed to discuss anything with him. One thing that I remember always seemed interesting to me. I was very close with Herman Feltz who I'm sure you remember. He was from Sherman, TX. After he finished college, he returned to Sherman and taught science in high school for a few years before joining USGS. He told me that one of his students at Sherman High was Jim Blakey. I always thought it was interesting that both Herman and Jim ended up working for USGS. I had great affection for him and am very sad to hear this news. If you find out anything about a memorial or some place to contribute in his name, please let me know.

**Cathy Hill writes:** Jim and I worked closer together as retirees than as active employees. He was a great wealth of historical information. He was a staunch supporter of our Scholarship Program, and we spoke of it often. He will be missed.

**Lindsay Swain writes:** Jim was one of the greatest people I knew. He will be missed by us all.





**Dave Root Johnson, 80**, passed away on May 5, 2024. Dave was born on Valentine's Day, 1944, in Los Angeles, CA, to James and Audrey Johnson. After graduating high school, he joined the U.S. Navy and became a motorboat operator on the USS Skagit in Vietnam from 1963 to 1967. Upon leaving the Navy, Dave began working as a Hydrologic Technician for the USGS in Eureka, CA. There, he met his beautiful wife Pat, and they had two wonderful daughters, Debbie and Tammy. In 1977, Dave and family transferred to the Montana District office in Helena, MT. He retired in 2003 with 39 years of service. While in Montana, Dave worked in the International Waters Section, water-use studies, and flood studies. Dave had an affinity for cooking, collecting many recipes and cookbooks that rarely improved his cooking skills - but, Dave was determined to perfect his famous navy bean and ham

hock soup – a little salty, a little sweet, and always leaving everyone dreading the next serving. Dave had a drive to learn as much as he could about technology, space, machinery and genealogy. His love for his wife, daughters, grandchildren and dogs knew no bounds. He is greatly missed.



**Benjamin Lewis Jones, 90**, passed away at his home in East Honolulu, HI, on October 15, 2023. He was the husband of the late Mae Yoshie Yonemura who passed away in 2021. The retired Director of the Western Division of the USGS, Ben was a graduate of NC State University in Geological Engineering and was born March 31, 1933 in Asheville, NC. He was the fourth of nine children born to the late Leland J. W. Jones, Sr., and Gertrude Emma Fitzgerald. He is survived by 5 children, 5 grandchildren, 7 great grandchildren, 2 sisters, and 1 brother.

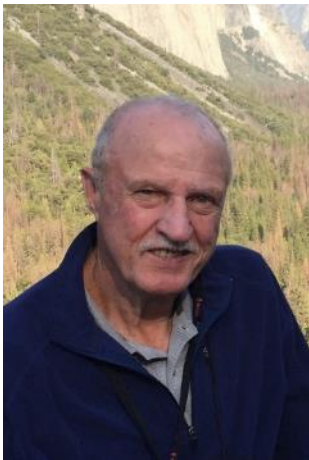


**Daniel Jeremy Milton, 89**, passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by family, in Vienna, VA, on May 26, 2024. As a young geology student, Dan spent summers conducting a mineralogic study of Colorado Plateau uranium deposits, mapping in MT, CA, and New England, and planning and setting up a thermochemical laboratory. Dan obtained degrees from Harvard University (BS-'54), from Caltech (MS-'56), and again from Harvard (PhD-'61), all in the field of geology, and had a distinguished 37-year career with the USGS. From 1961 to 1977, Dan was a member of USGS' Astrogeology Branch in Menlo Park, focusing on the geology of the Moon, Mars, and terrestrial impact craters. In 1965, Dan was one of 15 candidates for NASA's Group 4 astronaut selection process. This group, known informally as "The Scientists," would fly on the later Apollo missions. Though ultimately not chosen, he went on to lead geological training activities and field trips to prepare astronauts for the Apollo 11 lunar landing. Dan later worked on interpreting images from the Mariner 9 mission to Mars and was one of the first scientists to credibly claim that there was or had

been flowing water on Mars. He also played a role in mapping the Apollo 16 landing site in the Theophilus quadrangle. Dan's work on impact craters and shatter cones included fieldwork and publications related to the Campo del Cielo craters in Argentina; Henbury Crater, Gosses Bluff impact structure, Strangways crater, and Goat Paddock crater in Australia; Lonar crater in India; the Pretoria Saltpan in South Africa; the Köfels landslide in Austria; and the Qal'eh Hasan Ali maar craters in Iran. From 1977 through his retirement in 1991, he was a member of the USGS Eastern Environmental Geology branch, dedicating time to mapping near Charlotte, NC,



Frederick, MD, the Greenbrier Fault in the Great Smoky Mountains, and Alleghanian Granite of the Central Piedmont. Dan was a strong supporter of international cooperation in the field of geology, traveling to Kabul in the mid-1970s to train Afghan geologists and later serving as Managing Editor for the *International Geology Review*, responsible for identifying Russian-language articles for translation into English. Dan himself was author or co-author of more than 100 scientific or technical articles. A frequent participant in Geological Society of Washington meetings, Dan was also a fellow with the Geological Society of America, the Mineralogical Society of America, and the Meteoritical Society, as well as an honorary fellow with the School of Earth Sciences at the Australian National University.



**Marv Sherrill, 90**, died at his home in Madison, WI, on May 13, 2024, with his family at his side. Marv worked in St. Paul, MN, for the Soil Conservation Service, before beginning his USGS career in Madison in 1967. The family made lifelong friends in Madison. Moves with the USGS included Champaign-Urbana, IL; Austin, TX; and Rolla, MO, where he retired as District Chief in 1996. In retirement, Marv and Rosann returned to Madison, which always felt like home. Marv co-chaired the committee which hosted the USGS Retirees Reunion in 2006. The committee enjoyed the experience, attendees gave good reports. Retirement included many wonderful trips, and memories. During the pandemic, Marv and Rosann explored the State Parks of Wisconsin. Marv is survived by his wife Rosann, his spouse of 60 years; his son and daughter, his grandson and granddaughter, plus cousins, nieces, and nephews. The family will gather to celebrate the life of this very special man.



**John Vernon Skinner, Sr., 87**, of Columbus, IN, passed from this life on September 7, 2022, at Columbus Regional Hospital. John was born November 5, 1934, in Scottsbluff, NE, the son of Harry and Clyde Geneva Buckmaster Skinner. On November 27, 1954, he married Janice Elaine Magorian. John Skinner retired from the USGS in 1993 as an electrical engineer. He served most of his USGS career at the St. Anthony Falls Hydraulics Laboratory, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. There he conducted research on methods for collecting accurate suspended sediment concentrations in rivers. He enjoyed nature, camping and fishing. He also loved to cross country ski and looked forward to spending time at the family cabin in Wisconsin. John was extremely fond of dogs. He was talented in woodworking, making furniture or just carving various miniature items. John was a current member of the "Silver Sneakers" located at the

Y in Nashville. He will be greatly missed by those that knew him best.

**Elizabeth Grant (John's daughter) writes:** I am very late in notifying you about my father. The USGS was an extremely important part of his life. My mother, Janice, would like to continue to receive the newsletter. I enjoy reading them to her, as well as seeing the news of what was a part of my dad's life.



**Raymond Maurice Slade, Jr., 78**, passed away on May 26, 2024, after an illness in Austin, TX. Raymond was born on October 13, 1946, in Austin, TX. He was raised in church, attending Northwest Baptist and Crestview Baptist. He graduated in 1965 from Lanier High School in Austin. Raymond attended Blinn College in Brenham, where he played basketball for two years. He completed his college education with a degree in mathematics from Texas State University in San Marcos. He was also a veteran, having dutifully and gratefully served in the U.S. Army Signal Corps. Raymond is preceded in death by his father, mother, a brother Terry, and a former brother-in-law. He is survived by his loving sister and brother-in-law, nephew and wife, niece and husband, six great nephews, and his cherished longtime companion Helen Whitcraft. Born and raised in Austin,

Raymond attended Wooten Elementary through Lanier High School and made many lifelong friends along the way. As one of his fondest childhood memories, Raymond played Little League baseball under the management of his father at the North Austin Optimist Field. In later years, long after his father's death, Raymond was instrumental in naming a field there by the Slade name. Raymond was a proud and passionate public servant who had a long career studying water resources while employed at the USGS in Texas. He began his USGS career in 1968 as a Student Employee / Hydrologic Technician, where he collected data about surface water, groundwater, and water quality. After a few years, he became a Hydrologist and spent the rest of his 35-year career contributing to scientific advancements and numerous reports about floods, droughts, hydrology of the Edwards aquifer, urban and rural surface-water hydrology, and water quality. Raymond assisted the State highway department research program in updating flood statistics throughout Texas to aid in bridge design and floodplain management. He collaborated with scientists and historians in documenting flash floods; contributed to extreme rainfall documentation in central Texas; and used engineering skills to estimate peak floods after they occurred. He was a regular science contributor to various water-resource topics for the Edwards Aquifer, and particularly his beloved Barton Springs. Raymond was a natural communicator. He loved to share knowledge and understanding of the hydrologic sciences, spanning a wide range of topics such as groundwater, surface water, hydraulics, topographic surveying, floods, statistics, mathematics, and geology. He had a remarkable talent to adapt to audiences of laypeople, decision makers, and researchers. He was especially supportive of students and staff to continue educational opportunities whenever possible while they worked for USGS. Many of his students matured into productive careers with the USGS or elsewhere. He was generous with his time in assisting others; especially in technical writing, editing, and communication guidance. His storytelling and love of pranks are legendary, and many of his stories and antics are part of USGS oral history in Texas. After retirement from USGS, Raymond continued following his passion for water resources. He served on committees and boards for water-resource related organizations, and enjoyed presenting talks and reports for local, state, and national stakeholders. He worked for a time as a Hydrogeologist for the Edwards Aquifer Research and Data Center at Texas State University, as a Consulting Hydrologist, and as an Adjunct Professor at Austin Community College where he taught classes about water data collection. Raymond was devoted to his family and friends and was a lifelong Austinite who loved his hometown. He would drop whatever he was doing to aid whenever asked. Raymond loved to have fun, whether it was playing games, bike riding, walking his dog, sharing jokes, telling stories, talking about hydrology or Barton Springs, or playing pranks. He enjoyed singing and dancing and listening to all kinds of music. He particularly loved to listen to his sister play the piano. He volunteered as a dance DJ and karaoke KJ for retirement and nursing homes, fundraisers, and non-profit groups. Raymond lived life to the fullest and with a passion for all things that he cared for deeply.



**Eric William Strom, 61**, former USGS South Atlantic Water Science Center (SAWSC) Director, passed away May 28, 2024 at his home in Chapin, SC. He is survived by his wife Kathy and daughter Michelle. Eric received his Bachelor's Degree in Geology from Rice University in 1988. He then received a National Association of Geology Teachers internship at the USGS Woods Hole Branch of Atlantic Marine Geology. There he was able to do a wide variety of tasks, including a dive in the Johnson Sea-Link submarine. He was hooked on the USGS ever since. He went back to school and earned an M.S. in Geology from Texas A&M and then began his career with the USGS Water Resources Division in Mississippi in 1993. His focus was groundwater modeling. In 1998, he moved to the Texas Water Science Center and worked as the Groundwater Specialist, eventually moving into management as the

Associate Director for Investigations. In 2004, he became the Director of the South Carolina Water Science Center, and in 2015 oversaw the merger of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia Water Science Centers and became the Director of the newly formed SAWSC.

**Phil Turnipseed writes:** "I knew Eric very well as work associates and friends. We hired him in the Mississippi District to come into the USGS. He was an excellent employee, GW hydrologist, GW modeler and graphics maven."

**Charles "Chuck" Rex Whited** of Fort Myers, FL, USGS, passed away on April 19, 2024, after a brief illness. At this time, there are no memorial services planned. Kathy Whited asked that we share this sad news with his former friends and colleagues.

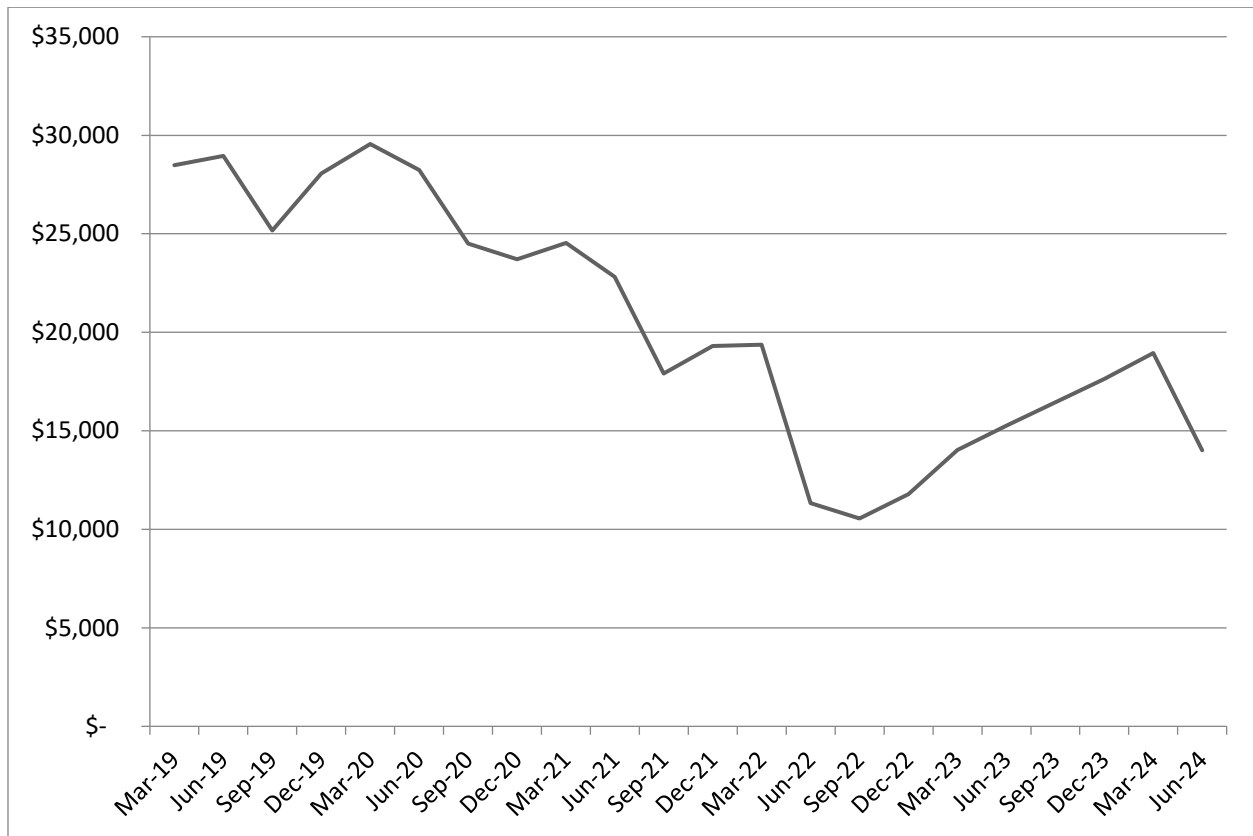
**Rose McGowan-Mix writes:** I have fond memories of working with Chuck on the yearly groundwater reports, and fun times at our Christmas Eve Breakfasts, golf outings, and other social events.



## TREASURER'S REPORT, SECOND QUARTER 2024

Treasurer Cathy Hill reports the organization had \$14,015 at the end of the first quarter. We have distributed \$4,492 to the 2024 Scholarship Awardees' Colleges.

Special thanks for contributions above dues go to Steven Anderson and Patrick Moran. Many thanks for your generosity.



### NEW MEMBERS

Peter Haeussler, Chugiak, AK – 2024  
P. Patrick (Pat) Leahy, Reston, VA – 2007  
Donald (Don) Rosenberry, Lakewood, CO - 2023  
Douglas (Doug) Yeskis, Brambleton, VA - 2023