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VALE RICHARD JEWELL



Associate Professor Richard Jewell was instrumental in establishing the Australian Centre for Geomechanics (ACG) in 1992, a University of Western Australia (UWA) not-for-profit mining research centre, of which he was Director from 1992 to 2000. Richard passed in late September 2020 at the age of 87. He is fondly remembered by his family, friends, former industry colleagues and academics as a true gentleman, inspiring mentor, and energetic tailings champion.

Richard commenced his career at UWA as a lecturer in 1972, and retired in 2000. Until only recently, he remained active in the ACG's tailings initiatives as an external consultant, a testament to his love of environmental geomechanics and his popularity throughout the global mining community.

In 1984, Richard was responsible for founding the Geomechanics Group within the Department of Civil Engineering, where he was pivotal in developing the geotechnical centrifuge facility. He was a wonderful strategist and influencer, by using his extensive networks within W.A., he persuaded Main Roads and UWA to provide funding to establish the centrifuge, at that time the largest facility of its kind in the southern hemisphere. He was also heavily involved in lab and field testing to provide a design basis for the Woodside Goodwyn A Platform. This project, and the sustained collaboration with Woodside, laid the foundation for the expansion of the geomechanics laboratory at UWA.

Richard brought to life the ACG International Paste and Thickened Tailings Conference series in the late 1990s. Richard co-chaired this popular conference from inception, and retired from this role at the 21st International Conference on Paste & Thickened Tailings held in Perth in 2018.

Richard was co-editor of the three editions of the well-read and readily referenced ACG “Paste & Thickened Tailings – A Guide”, and co-editor of over 20 conference proceedings.

Amongst many other projects, Associate Professor Jewell managed a large research project on Saline Tailings Disposal and Decommissioning in the mid 1990s, sponsored by MRIWA and industry.

The extraordinary legacy and positive impact Richard made, not only through the halls of the UWA Crawley Engineering Building and in the boardrooms of mining companies, is cherished and respected by so many. Today, the ACG counts close to 20 staff and researchers, an incredible achievement from the initial seed Richard planted almost 30 years ago.

We extend our sincere condolences to his family and to all those whose lives were touched by this magnetic, hard-working and remarkable man.