



William Harris Taubeneck

August 27, 1923 - May 24, 2016

William “Bill” Harris Taubeneck was born August 27, 1923 in Marshall, Illinois. Bill joined the U.S. Army to serve in World War II. Bill was a deeply dedicated field geologist and has long and deep connections to Oregon State University. He received both his B.S., 1949 and M.S., 1950 from Oregon State University. Bill was an instructor at OSU from 1951- 1955 while completing his PhD thesis at Columbia. He rose through OSU professorial ranks from Assistant of Geology, 1955, to Associate Professor of 1959, to Full Professor, 1965. Bill was a colorful instructor and received the Loyd F. Carter Award for Outstanding and Inspirational Teaching in Science in 1983. He retired in 1983 and maintained an active research presence for several decades, spending from May to October mapping in and around the Wallowa Mountains and returning in winters to OSU. His research passion was centered in the tectonic history of the Pacific Northwest with focus on the origin of the granitic rocks in the Wallowa Mountains and the many feeder dikes to the Columbia River Basalt that crosscut those granitic rocks. As part of his distinguished teaching career in the Department of Geology at OSU, he delivered the popular course “Geology of Oregon” for non-science majors. He was passionate about recruiting and retaining excellent students and graduate students to the geology program and consistently donated support funds to that purpose. He would often recruit women to his “Geology of Oregon” class by handing out a long (19 stanza) poem, which included the stanza: “Perhaps you can already bake a cake but for general education’s sake you should know about Crater

Lake GEOLOGY OF OREGON you should take.” Bill was PhD advisor to Ellen Bishop, distinguished OSU alumna, and Tracy Vallier, recipient of the congressional medal of honor, among many career geologists he trained. Later in his career, Bill was a driving force behind realizing Wilkinson Hall, which became the home for Geology in 1971. Bill specialized in igneous petrology (the study of rocks formed from magma) and published many articles about his work. He did extensive geological mapping in the Wallowa Mountains and northeastern Oregon, and in 1963 was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to study petrogenesis (dealing with the origin) of granitic rocks at Oxford University for a year. He was devoted to geology, the OSU department of geology and OSU sports. He kept physically fit. He strode the halls of the department in his signature khakis and wrote long and thoughtful letters in his exquisite copperplate handwriting, mainly pointing out which improvements should be made. He is remembered for field trips where the expectation was to be on the outcrop at first light and to look at the last rocks with the car headlights shining on the outcrop. “Wild Bill” field stories are many and legend. He held high standards for himself and expected the same of others. He modeled and inspired excellence and dedication. Memorial contributions can be made to The William H. Taubeneck Fund, which was established at the Benton Community Foundation in 2007. Its purpose is to support the Geology Program in recruiting highly qualified graduate students who are seeking a doctorate degree, and retaining these students while they are teaching assistants in the Department of Geosciences.

At his request, no services will be held.