In Loving Memory of

Celebrating a Wonderful Life

RONALD THEODORE McLAUGHLIN was born and raised in Windsor, Ontario Canada, April 6, 1929 to Russell Theodore McLaughlin and Lucille Elaine Macintosh. He attended Prince Edward Elementary School and Patterson Collegiate. He was an altar boy at All Saints Anglican Church.

To earn extra money as a child Ron unsporred people’s groceries to their homes in his red wagon. As he got older, he worked in the local ice plant, taught himself the game of golf so he could work as caddy, and between jobs he worked as a shoe shine boy.

Graduating with high honors, he won a scholarship to Queens University in Kingston, Ontario where he earned a degree in civil engineering. At Queens he nor orly played on the university basketball team, but co-produced student musicals for which he wrote the music and lyrics.

After finishing his undergraduate degree, Ron won an international fellowship to attend the university of his choice. He chose the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena California, where he received a Master's Degree and Doctorate in civil and chemical engineering. Using his basketball skills, Ron volunteered to coach a team of high school boys at a local Pasadena church.

It was in Pasadena where he met and married his wife of 62 years, Louise Young. During the periods between earning his Master's and Ph.D., Ronald and Louise returned to Canada where Ron worked on various engineering projects including the Canadian National Research Council and developing hydraulic models for the Saint Lawrence Seaway.

During his more than 30 years of professional practice in civil, environmental and hydraulic engineering, his main emphasis was on water related engineering. Starting in 1959 he worked in Thailand with the United Nations World Health Organization as a professor of Public Health Engineering in Southeast Asia. He developed coursework and field training and advised the government of Thailand in this area.

Ronald Theodore McLaughlin
April 6, 1929 – November 14, 2013
Being ahead of his time, much of the environmental work he did in the early 60s was later recognized to be innovative as alternative technologies for handling wastewater in rural areas gained prominence.

Following his work in Southeast Asia, Ron accepted a position at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, making him the university's first African American faculty member. While at MIT, he continued his research in engineering planning.

During this time he volunteered to work with other MIT faculty on an education opportunity committee that sponsored a Saturday program to give community youngsters an educational experience on the MIT campus. It was also during this time that he developed ENWATS (Environmental Water Systems), a consulting firm with a focus on international civil engineering projects mostly in Brazil and Colombia.

In the 1970s he returned to California where he taught engineering at UCLA, California State University at Long Beach and later worked for the California EPA.

Ron was an avid reader. His interests extended far beyond engineering. History, anthropology, geography, and economics all interested him. He loved music and studied classical guitar.

Ron was a loving husband, father and grandfather. He was active in the lives of his children, whether it was supervising their school work, taking them camping or teaching them to sail. By example, he taught them to strive to be their best, take chances and think for themselves. He was a gentle man with a keen sense of humor and always seemed to be able to fix anything—whether a broken faucet or a sibling quarrel.

Ron is survived by his wife, Louise, children Ranee, Eric and Roderick, grandchild Sinclair, and a host of relatives, extended family and friends.

Words cannot express how deeply we will miss him and his spirit of hope and optimism. We will strive to continue our lives in the loving, meaningful direction that he guided us, for his memory's sake.