Chair of Geophysics in Eric Rudd’s Department of Economic Geology at Adelaide University in 1969. His main focus was nurturing honours graduates who would be sought after by the mining industry. This has resulted in a ‘breed’ of geophysicists who have become leaders and achievers in the exploration industry. While best known for his passion for aeromagnetics and the accompanying emphasis on ‘hard-rock’ geology, many of his graduates have made their mark in the oil and gas industry, in seismic research, well logging and as founders and operators of successful exploration companies.

In the mining industry, David’s students include company founders, ore-body discoverers as well as high profile researchers and company geophysicists. During his term as Professor, David attracted many interstate and international students to pursue post graduate research at Adelaide University. In particular his female PhD graduates from India, China and Poland have each made major contributions to worldwide geophysics. Another great contribution to the mining industry was the Australian Mineral Foundation course, Geophysics for Geologists, which David helped initiate and actively supported for many years. Over 600 geologists in Australia and overseas attended this course in the 1970s, 80s and 90s. This did much to bring the two disciplines together and had a significant impact on the Australian exploration culture.

David’s research was predominantly through his students’ projects, as shown in his publication list, but he has had a strong personal interest in the mafic dyke patterns in Australia. He was an advisor on many Government airborne survey programmes, including the South Australian Exploration Initiative which became a watershed in the application of aeromagnetic and radiometric surveys in Australia. He nurtured relationships with the airborne geophysical industries in Finland, India, China and Africa and was a frequent visitor to these countries, as guest lecturer and counsel.

Whilst Professor of Geophysics at Adelaide, he was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Science, then invited to chair the University’s Education Committee. He also served as Acting Vice-Chancellor (1983–92), and was Chairman of the organising committees for ANZAAS congress in 1991 and 1997.

After retirement in 1992, David continued his involvement with geophysics students at Adelaide University and maintained his interest and enthusiasm for aeromagnetic applications. He continues today as advisor to Archimedes Consulting, a company created by one of his overseas PhD graduates, specialising in potential field applications for oil and gas exploration and deep crustal sensing.

David’s hallmarks have been his enthusiasm and wisdom. His ability to inspire students to passionately pursue careers in geophysics and exploration has created a legacy that will be long-lived. He has not been the ‘typical’ geophysicist or geophysical professor but has forged a path that has brought geophysicists and geologists together in all manner of geoscientific endeavours. To his former students and professional associates, he remains a teacher, a mentor, a respected colleague and, most of all, a friend.

David was awarded Honorary Membership of the ASEG in 1997 for his outstanding contribution to the profession to that time, and it is only fitting that David’s personal achievements, his positive influence on so many other members of the profession, and his distinguished career spanning 70 years, should now be recognised with the award of the ASEG Gold Medal.

Editor’s note: for more information and images about Professor Boyd’s career visit www.ageg.org.au/events.