Memorial to William Harrison White  
1913-1972

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Dr. William Harrison White, professor of geology at the University of British Columbia for twenty-five years, died suddenly on August 5, 1972, after some months of indifferent health.

Bill was born in Ontario on September 22, 1913, and moved at an early age to British Columbia. He graduated as a mining engineer at the University of British Columbia, entered their graduate school in geology and won a master’s degree, and in 1942 he received his Ph.D. at the University of Toronto. As a successful prospector during his student days, he found a promising gold-quartz showing in the Shulaps Mountains. After serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force from 1942 to 1945, he joined the British Columbia Department of Mines in 1946 and the Department of Geology in 1947.

Bill White published some 25 reports on properties or mining camps for the Department of Mines and a similar number of research papers in scientific journals. His papers include the outstanding “Cordilleran Tectonics in British Columbia” and, more recently, numerous papers with his associates and graduate students on absolute (K-Ar) ages of igneous rocks and ores.

In 1957 he was a co-winner of the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy Barlow Medal for a paper on the geology and mineral deposits of Highland Valley. He was awarded the Willet G. Miller Medal in 1961 by the Royal Society of Canada.

He lectured for many years in evening classes of the prospecting school of the British Columbia and Yukon Chamber of Mines. He held several offices in the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and of The Geological Society of America, a member of the Society of Economic Geologists, and a Professional Engineer.

Bill, with the help of the late Professor Bob Thompson, established the University of British Columbia Field School at Oliver, British Columbia. He was a very practical and resourceful man—thus, when money for the field school was short, he inspired his students to help build bunkhouses, dig wells, and install lighting systems and plumbing (field school covered many subjects not listed in the curriculum). In the early 1950s, in an 18-foot boat of his own design and construction, he examined the geology of the coast from Vancouver to Alaska. More recently, he built a 36-foot cutter; he hoped to find a Red Sea-type metal-rich brine deposit on the west coast of North America.

He was almost equally at home in geology and mining, and, as a part-time lecturer
in mineral engineering, he was an invaluable link between that department, geology, and the mineral industry.

Bill White made a notable contribution to the mining industry, partly through his own work (for example, in the Highland Valley camp, where he had an important hand in the development of Bethlehem Copper and Lornex deposits), but mainly through passing on to a generation of students his down-to-earth ideas on the genesis of ore bodies.

He is survived by his wife, Betty; three sons, David, of Roberts Creek, British Columbia; James, of Dundas, Ontario; Donald, at home; and one daughter, Mrs. Paul A. (Alison) Weinzweig, of Toronto; and four grandchildren.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM HARRISON WHITE


1946 Reports on the following mining properties and operations: British Columbia Minister of Mines, Ann. Rept.: Silver Tip Group, p. 62; Morris Summit Gold Mines, Ltd., p. 62-66; Scottie Group, p. 66-68; East Group, p. 68-72; Portland Group, p. 72-74; Silverado Group, p. 74-78; Moly B. Claim, p. 79; Enterprise Group, p. 79-80; Lead Mountain Group, p. 80-81; Gold Drop Mines, Ltd., p. 82-85; Ida Group, p. 85-86; Silver King Group, p. 87-88; Lorraine Group, p. 88; Hedley Monarch Gold Mines, Ltd., p. 126-132.


