Memorial to Donald Boyd Gould
1906–1989

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Donald Boyd Gould, a Fellow of the Geological Society of America, was born in Norman, Oklahoma, on December 6, 1906, and died on February 25, 1989, in Denver, Colorado. He was best known as an educator and for his expertise in the structural geology and paleozoic stratigraphy of Colorado and Utah, the regional geology of the Canadian Arctic archipelago, the tectonics of piercement domes of Queen Elizabeth Islands, and as an air-photo analyst.

Don was raised in an academic environment and introduced to the science of geology at a very early age. His father, Charles Newton Gould, was the first Oklahoma state geologist and founder of the geology department at the University of Oklahoma at Norman. As a young boy, Don often accompanied his father on many geology department field trips to the Arbuckle Mountains of Oklahoma.

A family vacation trip in 1918 took the Goulds to South Park, Colorado, where Don’s parents decided to build a cabin near the Weston Pass road and to call it Beaver Lodge. Later in his life Don selected South Park as the subject of his doctoral dissertation, and Beaver Lodge became a focal point for many of his geology classes from Cornell College and Colorado College.

Educated in the public schools of Norman and Oklahoma City, Don received the Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Oklahoma in 1928. While an undergraduate, he worked the summer of 1926 for the Borealis Oil Company, mapping the country around Cisco, Texas; he spent the summer of 1927 in Leadville, Colorado, as a rodman on a topographic mapping crew; and in 1928 he attended summer school at the University of Iowa, taking courses in museum methods. After washing dishes in a restaurant that summer, he earned enough money to purchase his first car, a Model T Ford. The summer of 1929 found him mapping the Model Dome east of Trinidad, Colorado. This structure produced helium gas from an exploratory well drilled by the Helium Company of Kentucky. For this experience Don earned enough money to purchase a brand new Model A Ford roadster, which provided transportation for three subsequent seasons of field work near Trout Creek Pass, Colorado, enabling him to complete his Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Iowa in 1936.

In 1930 Don Gould and Frances Leitner were married, and they lived in Mt. Vernon, Iowa, from 1931 to 1937 while he taught geology at Cornell College. The marriage produced two sons, Allen, who lives in Aurora, Colorado, and Warren, of Los Angeles, California. Frances died in 1980.

From 1937 to 1955 Don served as chairman and professor of geology at Colorado College in Colorado Springs, Colorado. It was during this period that I first met him, when he hired me as an instructor in the department to help cope with the post–World War II burgeoning enrollments. Watching a gifted teacher and talented artist, I was often in awe as I watched him cover an entire blackboard with three-dimensional block diagrams showing the evolution of the Colorado Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. These were the years of lean departmental budgets.
and heavy teaching loads. When equipment couldn't be purchased, Don would design and build items such as air-photo stereo viewers, miniature and full-size stadia rods, and even a tablesized relief model of the Pikes Peak region with areal and subsurface geology all portrayed. Of the many courses he taught, structural geology, field methods, geologic map interpretation, and geomorphology were his favorites. But he also loved stratigraphy, and because of his deep interest in the Pennsylvanian system of rocks, we often made bets in the department to see when, and if, he would get past the Carboniferous when teaching historical geology. There were times when the Mesozoic and Cenozoic eras were covered in record time! His interest in the Carboniferous was even displayed in Beaver Lodge cabin, where Don had constructed a stratigraphic fireplace using Precambrian rocks for the base and Pennsylvanian at the top, with a hearth of Permian sandstone. Generations of Colorado College geology seniors looked forward with great anticipation to their traditional spring field trip to South Park and a stay at Beaver Lodge.

Don left Colorado College in 1955 to work as a research geologist and air-photo analyst for Geophoto Services in Denver, Colorado. He was later transferred to Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and subsequently retired in Denver in 1968.

He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi, Sigma Gamma Epsilon, the Oklahoma, Iowa, and Colorado-Wyoming Academies of Science, the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, the Rocky Mountain Association of Geologists, and the American Institute of Professional Geologists, and a Fellow of the Geological Society of America.


Following his retirement, he engaged in a long and painful battle with Parkinson's disease, but managed always to keep busy. He was an active member of the Geolly Boys discussion group in Denver until shortly before his death and for several years prior would spend every Friday in the field doing plane table mapping with his very dear friend, Harry W. Oborne.

One of his fondest recollections was his return to Norman, Oklahoma, in 1951 to participate in the dedication ceremony of the Charles N. Gould Hall of Geology at the University of Oklahoma and subsequently to see the publication of his father's autobiography, The Covered Wagon Geologist.

Former students, colleagues, and friends have expressed their love, admiration, and friendship for this truly dedicated teacher by establishing the Donald B. Gould Scholarship in Geology at Colorado College.