Memorial to Harold E. Enlows
1911–1985

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Harold E. Enlows died in Corvallis, Oregon, on August 8, 1985. Harold was known everywhere and by everybody as “Sharkey.” The origin of the nickname is a bit obscure, but evidently goes back to his school days when an aspiring (later champion) heavyweight boxer named Jack Sharkey was often “saved by the bell.” Apparently young Harold also developed some skill at utilizing the bell—in this case the school bell—to save himself when called upon to answer some deep and searching question in class; it happened at least often enough to warrant the comparison by his classmates.

Born June 11, 1911, in Mason City, Illinois, to Paul A. and Effie Mathers Enlows, he received a Bachelor of Science degree in petroleum engineering at the University of Tulsa in 1935. Harold’s father died in 1936, but his mother, herself a science graduate of the University of Illinois, encouraged her son to continue his education. This goal was vastly aided by Dr. A. N. Murray at the University of Tulsa who recognized Harold’s potential and was instrumental in obtaining for him a teaching assistantship at the University of Chicago. Earning his Master of Science degree in geology at Chicago in 1936, Harold then studied mineralogy, petrography, and economic geology at the University of Arizona, where he was granted his Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1939.

In 1938, Sharkey rejoined Dr. Murray at the University of Tulsa as an assistant professor. During this period he met Jeanette Hendrickson. There was “instant chemistry,” to quote Jeanette, and soon they were married and embarked on a happy and varied life together, a marriage lasting 45 years. Jeanette’s sole complaint seems to have been that Harold, an avid photographer of things geologic, never took her picture except when he was using her for scale against an outcrop. Gay and full of laughter, as well as artistically blessed, “Jeep” was a perfect partner for Sharkey. They had a full and happy life. Jeep died on February 8, 1986, six months to the day after her husband’s death.

From 1942 until 1946, Sharkey served in the U.S. Navy as a lieutenant commander. Among his assignments he served as Aerological Officer at the Naval Air Station at Adak, Alaska, and Director of Training for the Naval Research Center at Dugway Proving Grounds, Tooele, Utah.

From the Navy, Sharkey returned to teaching at the University of Tulsa; by 1962 he was chairman of the department. He had a profound influence on a myriad of students, many of whom became close friends. During those years he also worked summers—both in the laboratory and in the field—as a consultant for Phillips, Sinclair, and, for many years, Amoco.

In 1963, at the urging of one of the authors of this memorial, he came to Oregon State University where, from 1969 until he achieved Professor Emeritus status in 1976, he was the chairman of the department. It is appropriate here to quote the words of his successor as chairman, Dr. Robert Yeats:

Harold Enlows became chairman at a difficult time in the history of the department. However, by the time I arrived, the situation was under control, people were working together, and the department was growing in terms of quality and quantity of student graduates and in respectability as a center of research. Harold’s philosophy of academic leadership was to provide an environment in which teachers could teach and do research with a minimum of interference from the bureaucracy. The landmarks of progress during his chairmanship were focused on individual
Retiring in 1976 to what Sharkey referred to as a "light load," he continued to teach the year-long optical mineralogy/petrography sequence. He also was a regular instructor at the summer geology camp which, during an Oregon financial crisis, he offered to teach without salary. In addition, he kept active in research and publications, and became the acknowledged authority on the welded tuffs of the state of Oregon.

He will be best remembered throughout the profession as a professor of geology, especially by the host of geologists who were fortunate enough to be his students. He taught geology for more than forty years, and he loved it. It was what he did best. Consulting was never undertaken at the expense of his students or classes. Sharkey taught many graduate courses, and he did so superbly, but it was undergraduate courses and students that he most enjoyed. He was a rare and gifted teacher; his students knew it and welcomed him into their company. The highlight of hundreds of field trips, from Oklahoma to Oregon, was Sharkey, glass raised high, saluting his students with his famous rendition of "The Hermit of Sharktooth Shoal," or perhaps "The Face on the Bar Room Floor." He had the talent of being a pal, and yet maintaining respect and dignity.

Harold Enlows was a long-time member of The American Association of Petroleum Geologists, a charter member of the American Institute of Professional Geologists, a Fellow of both the American Mineralogical Society and the Geological Society of America, member of the Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists, Society of Economic Geologists, and the Society of Sigma Xi. He was a registered professional geologist in the state of Oregon and a charter member of the Oregon Board of Geologist Examiners. In 1976, Harold was the recipient of the Outstanding Scientist award of the Oregon Academy of Science.

Outstanding teacher, humorous, kind, loving husband, eminent researcher, stabilizing influence, and best friend to many—he will be missed.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF H. E. ENLOWS

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