Bill Matthews passed away on February 14, 1991, in Beaumont, Texas, at the age of 71. Born March 1, 1919, in Henryetta, Oklahoma, he moved to Fort Worth, Texas, when he was one year old. Both of his parents were public school teachers, so Bill was immersed in the importance of an education and good teaching throughout his childhood. The family lived in Amarillo, Texas, and then moved to Livingston, Texas, where Bill graduated from high school in 1936.

Bill began his college work at Tulane University from 1936 to 1938 as a premedical student. Deciding against medical school, Bill worked in New Orleans as an apprentice embalmer at a funeral home for two years. During his visits to local hospitals, Bill met Jennie Anzalone, who was attending Touro Infirmary School of Nursing in New Orleans. After Jennie received her nursing degree, Bill and Jennie were married in September of 1940. They then went to Shreveport, Louisiana, where Bill attended the Southern College of Morticians. Following graduation the couple returned to New Orleans, where Bill was a funeral director during 1941–1942 and member of the Louisiana State Board of Examiners and Funeral Directors. He then passed the examinations for the Texas State Board of Funeral Directors (in Galveston), and they relocated to Marshall, Texas, where Bill practiced until 1943.

Bill volunteered for the U.S. Navy in 1943 to serve during World War II and was assigned as a Pharmacist Mate First Class to a hospital in Honolulu, Hawaii. He was stationed there until his discharge in November 1945 after the end of the war.

In 1946 Bill decided to return to college, so he enrolled at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, and majored in geology. He received his bachelor’s (1948) and master’s (1949) degrees from TCU and then served as an assistant professor during 1949–1950 and 1951–1952. During 1950–1951, Bill was enrolled at the University of Texas at Austin, working on research for a Ph.D. degree. In 1952 he joined Texaco, Inc., but in 1955 realized that more chalk than oil flowed through his veins. Bill joined the faculty at Lamar University, where he remained throughout a truly distinguished career that spanned 30 years. At Lamar University he obtained high honors: recipient of a Minnie Stevens Piper Award for Distinguished Teaching (1966), a Regents’ Merit Award for Teaching Excellence (1973), and the coveted Regents’ Professor of Geology title (1975). He retired in 1985 as Regents’ Professor Emeritus.

Bill Matthews was extremely active as a teacher, consultant, editor, and writer during his career at Lamar University. He held the title of geologist at the Bureau of Economic Geology, University of Texas at Austin, during the summers of 1958 through 1960 and in 1964. During this time, two important publications were prepared for the Bureau: Texas Fossils—An Amateur Collector’s Handbook (1960) and The Geologic Story of Longhorn Cavern (1963).

In January 1992, Bureau Director William L. Fisher included a dedication to Bill Matthews in the eleventh printing of Texas Fossils. Dr. Fisher noted that more than 52,000 copies had
been printed and sold and, "In many ways, the guidebook epitomizes Bill Matthews—it is straightforward, unpretentious, and popular, all attributes that fit Bill well."

These ever-popular publications set the stage for Bill's future, clearly demonstrating his flair for blending interesting writing with sound understanding in historical geology and a special affection for fossils. A writer and contributing editor to many periodicals, magazines, and encyclopedias, he was the author of some 25 books, along with numerous pamphlets and reference guides. He also prepared a variety of secondary-school teaching materials for commercial distribution. These popular aids to teaching included films, film strips, cassettes, transparencies, charts, and samples of fossils.

Space permits listing only a few of his favorite publications. He was the first choice of any publisher with a popular series for a book on the geology of Earth in general or any special topics desired for their series. One example is his contributions to *The Story of*... series published by Harvey House, which included *The Earth* (1968), *Volcanoes and Earthquakes* (1969), and *Glaciers and the Ice Age* (1974).

His popularity as a writer who made geology a fascinating subject for youngsters spread quickly. This resulted in many requests from popular journals for articles, especially those focused on his knowledge of and love for writing about earth history, fossils, and dinosaurs. Bill's articles appeared in 26 different serial publications, including *Science and Children, National Parks Magazine, Highlights for Children, Boy's Life, Natural History Magazine, Black Collegian, British Journal of Geology Teaching,* and *Southeast Asia Geology Bulletin,* to name a few.

Bill's role in professional affairs focused on earth science education, which he did with distinction. He worked on and chaired numerous committees and boards through three decades of involvement in his profession. He was a key player in shaping the destiny of earth science education of numerous organizations, including the Earth Science Curriculum Project (ESCP), American Geological Institute (AGI), Texas Academy of Sciences (TAS), National Association of Geology Teachers (NAGT), American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG), and American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), among others. When not committed to ESCP—he served as consultant, writer, editor of their reference series, and ultimately senior author of revised versions of *Investigating the Earth*—Bill juggled writing schedules on various other books while serving on committees and captivating audiences with entertaining and informative presentations that ranged the gamut of the earth sciences. In recognition of his important role with ESCP and earth science education in general, NAGT named him recipient of the Neil Miner Award in 1965.

One astonishing feat Bill Matthews performed was doing two normally full-time jobs (and doing both very well) during the interval from 1972 to 1983 when he served as director of education and manpower for the AGI while a professor at Lamar University. One outgrowth of his AGI assignment is the award-winning series of earth science films produced by Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational Corporation. They set the standard for educational films being prepared today. Other important assignments include the TAS Board of Directors (1965–1969), the Advisory Board (1962–1968) and the board chairman (1969–1970) of *Science and Children* magazine; president of NAGT (1969–1970), and chairperson of Section E, Geography and Geology, of AAAS (1983–1986).

Bill appears to have served on one or more AAPG committees throughout his professional career. These included the Youth Activities Committee (formerly the Boy Scout Committee), where he masterminded changes in the guidelines for the geology merit badge; the Public Information Committee, where he restructured the materials being used to bring petroleum geology to public attention; and the Industry Liaison Committee, where he spearheaded a program to assist unemployed AAPG members in identifying alternative careers in earth science education.
AAPG acknowledged his contributions, naming him recipient of a Distinguished Service Award in April 1989. Likewise, AGI expressed their appreciation to Bill when, in 1988, they gave him the William B. Heroy, Jr. Award for Distinguished Service to AGI.

It should be emphasized that "serve" is the wrong verb for Bill’s participation in the affairs of AAPG, AGI, and other societies to which he was dedicated. More apropos are words like "initiate," "implement," "reorganize," and "revitalize." That is the magic touch he brought to the table when the meeting began—and which he carried forward long after the meeting ended.

Bill’s service to the geological community extended to the international scene in different ways. Several of his books were translated into foreign languages and were popular in other countries. Geology Made Simple (1967) was a big hit in its Spanish edition as was the Japanese translation of Invitation to Geology (1973). Bill also became involved with the International Union of Geological Sciences, and served on its committee on science teaching and commission on geology teaching, eventually becoming chairman of the commission. In July 1989, Bill chaired the committee for the science theatre program for the 28th International Geological Congress in Washington, D.C.

Bill is survived by his lovely wife, Jennie, his two sons, William H. IV and James D., and five grandchildren. He leaves behind a legacy as an especially gifted teacher with a genuine love for geology and all students interested in learning about geology. His writings touched a wide spectrum of people—from grade-school children eager to learn about dinosaurs to retired folks touring our national parks. Indeed, he was a leader among a small group who championed earth science education and brought attention to its importance. The role of earth science education is now well appreciated by many others, and thus the contributions of Bill Matthews are destined to continue and never die.

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