



Margaret Petersen

1920-2013

IIHR-Hydrosience & Engineering alumnus Margaret Petersen died on January 18, 2013, in Tucson, Arizona, at the age of 92. Professor Petersen was renowned as a very capable hydraulic engineer in the mid-1900s, when it was uncommon for women to be involved in engineering. She remained professionally involved in her field and in the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) throughout her 55-year career. That career began in 1942 when she joined the US Army Corps of Engineers (COE) in Rock Island. She then returned to the University of Iowa (UI), receiving a bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 1947 and a master's degree in Mechanics and Hydraulics in 1953. She remained with the COE for nearly four decades, during which time she dealt with design of hydraulic structures, channel hydraulics, water resource planning, and related subjects. She held increasingly responsible posts and worked on some of the nation's largest water projects, including Mississippi River flood control and navigation efforts, Missouri River storage reservoirs, and the Arkansas River navigation project.

In 1980, Ms. Petersen became an engineering professor at the University of Arizona. Here she developed new graduate coursework in hydraulic engineering, wrote the well-known textbook *River Engineering* (1986), and became an invited lecturer and consultant in several foreign countries. She became an emeritus professor in 1991, but did not fully retire from teaching until 1997. She was known as an influential mentor and supportive sounding board who was tremendously loyal to her students and also brought a practical, applied side to water engineering. She endowed two scholarships at the University of Iowa for female engineering undergraduates.

Professor Petersen was an Honorary Member of the ASCE (1991). She received the ASCE's Hunter Rouse Hydraulic Engineering Award (2001) and its Environmental and Water Resources Institute's first Lifetime Achievement Award (2002). The latter institute also established the Margaret Petersen Outstanding Woman of the Year Award in Petersen's honor.

Professor Petersen received the UI's Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award in 1987, and she was inducted into the UI College of Engineering's Distinguished Alumni Honor Wall in 1996.

She was an IAHR Member.

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