

## **Donald McMillan**

Donald Theodore McMillan, State Geologist and Director of the Utah Geological and Mineral Survey (UGMS) between 1974 and 1981, passed away in Tucson, Arizona October 27, 2007, at the age of 91.

Donald T McMillan was born in Scarsdale, NY in 1916, and raised in a suburb of New York City. As a boy, he developed a lifelong affinity for the outdoors, which propelled him to his future career as an exploration geologist. He received his bachelors degree from Williams College in Williamstown Massachusetts, an MA in 1938, and a masters degree in geology from the Montana School of Mines in 1939. With jobs scarce, his first paycheck came from working as a miner in the copper mines for Anaconda Company in Butte MT.

Immediately after Pearl Harbor, Don enlisted in the Army Air Corps. On the day he got his wings, he married Elizabeth Keefe. He subsequently flew in the Pacific Theater, and after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, led the first American planes onto Japanese soil to bring supplies to the country's citizens. He retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the USAF Reserve.

Don returned to Butte after the war and started his career as a professional geologist. He moved his family throughout the West, including stints in Zacatecas, Mexico, where he became bilingual, and Tucson, AZ, the city he would return to later in life. Throughout the 1960s, he worked for Strauss Exploration, becoming Vice President of Exploration. This allowed him to travel to places such as Panama, Columbia, Peru and Ghana.

In 1974 he was appointed Director of the Utah Geological and Mineralogical Survey, becoming Utah's third State Geologist. In his seven years with the Survey, he oversaw expansion of the Applied Geology Program, increasing the Survey's role in investigating geologic hazards and performing engineering-geology work. During this time he often assisted with engineering-geology investigations, with a notable one being his evaluation of the loss of salt from the Bonneville saltflats between the 1960s and 1970s. In 1976 Don moved the UGMS from its cramped quarters on the University of Utah campus into University of Utah's Research Park.

After his retirement from the UGMS in 1981 Don shifted to Tucson, AZ. Along with a love of travel, Don's favorite activities were skiing and sailing, passions he passed on to his children. He is survived his wife Betty, his sister Helen Routh, four daughters, five grandchildren, and six great grand-children.

### *Sources:*

Obituary in Mining Engineering, Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration, February 2008, page 97.

Retirement article, Survey Notes, Vol. 15, No. 2, Utah Geological and Mineralogical Survey, May 1981.

