

Frank J. Markewicz (1921-1999)



Frank J. Markewicz, Acting State Geologist of New Jersey from 1981 to 1983, died November 25, 1999 at the age of 78. Frank was born in Newark and lived most of his life in Chester, New Jersey. A World War II veteran, he attended Upsala College and graduated in 1950 with a dual major in geology and economics.

Frank began his career mapping coal deposits on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula for the U.S. Geological Survey and joined the New Jersey Geological Survey in 1953. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, he supervised the engineering geology of two major reservoirs in northwestern New Jersey, Round Valley and Spruce Run. From his work at Spruce Run Reservoir, Frank developed the stratigraphic subdivisions of the 4000-foot thick Cambrian-Ordovician Kittatinny Limestone as well as the 2,500-foot thick Taconic sequence.

This knowledge of carbonates enabled him to locate the water supply for a large fish hatchery along the Pequest River in Warren County. Frank located many wells at the Pequest Fish Hatchery; the last one he located was tested at 4,500 gallons per minute with a 9-foot drawdown. As his successor, Haig Kasabach, said, "He had a sixth sense about the geology and where to find water." Frank's work at Pequest Fish Hatchery is the legacy of his government career and a plaque at the hatchery attests to his contribution.

In addition to Frank's ground-water and carbonate work, he discovered and mapped three major ilmenite deposits in Ocean County. Two of these became large commercial operations. He also studied the state's radioactive mineral occurrences and its economic minerals, with a particular focus on glauconite.

As Acting State Geologist, Frank lobbied energetically and successfully to use for geologic mapping a portion of the funding made available by the passage of a 1981 State Water Bond Act. His effort resulted in the growth of the State Geological Survey through participation in a U.S. Geological Survey-New Jersey Geological Survey cooperative program to revise the State Geologic map, which had not been done since 1912. Today, New Jersey has the most detailed State Geologic map in the nation.

Frank retired from the New Jersey Geological Survey after thirty years of state service and was the recipient of an Outstanding Service Award. He then devoted most of his energy to the Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority, where he served as a pro bono ground-water consultant and as a member of its Board from 1986 until his death. He assisted the authority by locating two well fields comprising eight production wells; the total pumping allocation is 186 million gallons per month. The Municipal Utilities Authority dedicated their major ground-water pumping station as the Markewicz Pumping Station in Frank's honor.

Frank was a member of the American Institute of Professional Geologists and served as President of the New York Section. Known affectionately to his close friends and family as Mark, he is survived by Tillie, his wife of 47 years, one son, one daughter, and five grandchildren.