



# Association of Applied Geochemists

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## OBITUARY FOR GERRY GOVETT

The Association of Applied Geochemists (AAG) was sad to hear of the death of one of our best-known members, Gerry Govett. He died in January 2019. Gerry was a founding member of the AAG (formerly the Association of Exploration Geochemists), president of the association from 1976 to 1977, and recipient of the AAG Gold Medal in 2009. Gerry was a major contributor to the development of the association, including the transition to the new name and the broadening of its scope.

Gerry was born in Sully (Wales) and was baptised Gerald James Spurgeon Govett. His third name acknowledged his mother's high regard for that illustrious 19<sup>th</sup> century evangelist Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1843–1892). In a manner analogous to Spurgeon's zeal, Gerry had an equally keen commitment to research and teaching.

Gerry completed his first degree at the University of Wales (Cardiff, Wales), followed by a PhD at Imperial College London (UK) working on geochemical exploration for copper in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). After seven years with the Research Council of Alberta (Canada) following completion of his PhD, Gerry headed off to academia where he would spend the next 30 years, commencing with the University of the Philippines (1965) and continuing on to the University of New Brunswick (Canada) (1966–1976), and finally to the University of New South Wales (UNSW) (Australia) (1977–1996). Shortly after arriving at UNSW, Gerry was appointed Head of the School of Applied Geology, and he attracted a number of graduate students into exploration geochemical research. He was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Applied Science in 1983 and continued as a highly respected academic leader in that role until that faculty was disestablished when all the sciences at UNSW condensed into a single Science Faculty. He would meet his future wife, Idelies, at UNSW.

During his academic career, Gerry was also a consultant geochemist for the United Nations Development Programme; a member of the Canadian Geoscience Council; a visitor to the Cooperative Research Centre for Landscape Environments and Mineral Exploration (CRC LEME) (Australia); a member of several national or international scien-



Gerry Govett

tific panels and scientific projects; and President of the Australian Geoscience Council (1983–1984). He was also involved in the corporate sector, including a period as Chair of Delta Gold Ltd. He was regularly called upon for advice by various geological surveys around the world and was on the editorial boards of several scientific journals.

Gerry was a great colleague, mentor, and a very supportive supervisor to many geologists and geochemists. His list of co-authors and students is a veritable who's who of the exploration geochemical world from the 1960s to the 1990s. A long-term and fiercely loyal support staff was testament to his integrity and personal qualities. His perspective on a wide range of both educational and mining industry issues was often sought and readily given. His dry sense

of humour and calm manner was much appreciated by colleagues and students.

He was a meticulous scientist and a very engaging writer, though debates with students on the nuances of punctuation and grammar sometimes rivalled some scientific arguments. He commenced a number of litho-geochemical studies in eastern Australia and co-authored one of the earliest papers on electro-geochemical dispersion through soil cover.

Though his contribution to many aspects of exploration geochemistry and other aspects of geology is evident in his string of highly cited papers, his most enduring legacy is probably the landmark *Handbook of Exploration Geochemistry*, whose seven volumes Gerry edited. In the case of Volume 3 on litho-geochemistry, Gerry also contributed much of the content. Gerry was on the board of CRC LEME and of several exploration companies.

In later years, Gerry moved to the New South Wales southern highlands where he continued to pursue some economic geology interests, as well as turning his hand to olive growing, and continued to attend International Applied Geochemistry symposiums. Gerry will be sorely missed by the exploration geochemical community, and we extend our condolences to Idelies and others of Gerry's family.

**David Cohen**

On behalf of many of his colleagues and former students

## RECENT ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN EXPLORE

The following abstract is for an article that appeared in issue 181 (December 2018) of the *Explore* newsletter.

### "New Base Metal Mineral Potential in Southern Northwest Territories, Canada"

Roger C. Paulen<sup>1</sup>, Stephen J.A. Day<sup>1</sup>, Robert D. King<sup>2</sup>, Stephen J. Piercey<sup>2</sup>, I. Rod Smith<sup>3</sup>

Heavy and mid-density indicator minerals recovered from stream sediment and till samples, and the geochemical and isotopic characteristics of such minerals, are powerful tools when exploring for undiscovered economic minerals and mineral deposits in glaciated terrain. As part of the Geological Survey of Canada's Geo-mapping for Energy and Minerals Program (2013–2020), stream sediments and till samples were collected, at a reconnaissance scale, across a 35,000 km<sup>2</sup> region of the southern Northwest Territories (Canada). This region includes the past-producing Pine Point Mississippi Valley-type (MVT) mining district, which, despite an indicated high potential to host additional mineral resources, has almost no other surface mineral occurrences: mineralization is known to occur at depth and is, therefore, uneconomic. In this paper, we provide results from surficial sediments that illustrate the

potential for new, undiscovered mineralized bedrock surface targets. Secondary ion mass spectrometry determination of S- and Pb-isotope compositions of galena grains recovered from till identifies these galenas as derived from MV-type deposits, but clearly distinguishes them from Pine Point sources. Other indicator minerals point to potential Manto and/or sediment-hosted Cu targets. Galena comminution properties and former dispersal studies in glacial sediments suggest that undiscovered buried bedrock surface sources may lie as little as one kilometer away from peak sample abundance sites. Additional sample collection and geochemical and isotopic analyses are being pursued to further define the mineral potential of the southern Northwest Territories.

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The full article can be viewed at: <https://www.appliedgeochemists.org/index.php/publications/explore-newsletter>