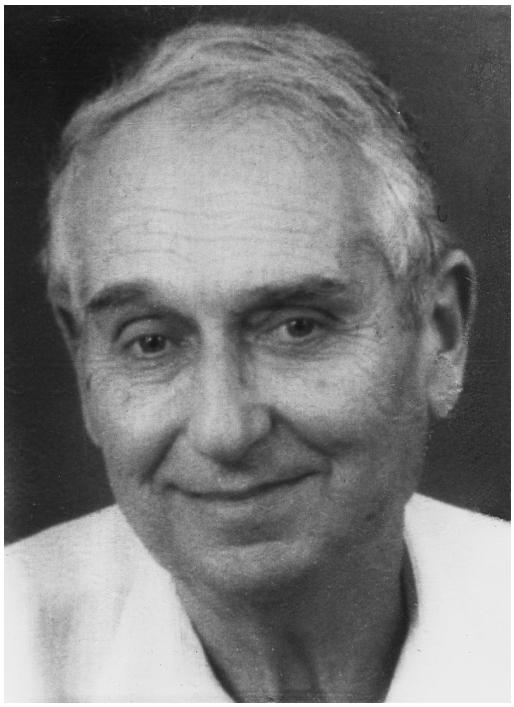
OBITUARY

Gdalyah Wiseman
1926–96



Gdalyah Wiseman

Dr Gdalyah Wiseman passed away suddenly, in December 1996, while undergoing treatment for stomach pains in hospital. He had been fully active in research, consulting, and teaching up to the time of his hospitalization in early December. He was engaged in the preparation of a paper for the forthcoming XIVth International Conference on Soil Mechanics and Foundation Engineering in Hamburg this fall, as well as in preparing his personal contribution as a member of the panel on 'Retaining Structures and Excavated Slopes'.

Dr Wiseman was born and grew up in Montreal, Canada. He commenced his civil engineering studies at McGill University, but completed his BSc degree at the Israel Institute of Technology after having immigrated to the newly established state in 1948. He accomplished his MSc studies with Professor Arthur Casagrande at Harvard University, in 1953, and stayed at Harvard for another 2 years to initiate studies towards a doctorate while acting as Professor Casagrande's assistant. His experiences in Harvard, while in close contact with both Arthur Casagrande and Leo Casagrande, as well as Karl Terzaghi and his wife, Ruth Terzaghi, resulted in indelible impressions that contributed greatly towards his extensive background in soil mechanics which served him in later years. He was requested to return to Israel in 1955 to assist in establishing the field of soil mechanics at the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology. He completed his DSc work at the Technion in 1959 with research on the establishment of subgrade bearing capacities in the field of airfield pavement design. Professor Wiseman devoted his main efforts towards teaching and research at the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, becoming a full professor in the Civil Engineering Faculty in 1970. He was designated as Louis and Samuel Seiden Professor of Soil Engineering in 1986, as successor to Joseph G. Zeitlen, who had retired from the Technion and had been appointed as Professor Emeritus. Usually as a joint author, Dr Wiseman published more than 80 papers, mainly in international conferences, on a wide range of geotechnical subjects, including laboratory researches, prediction of expansive clay properties, research on over-consolidated clays, experience with roads and buildings on expansive clays, studies of landslides, prediction of pile capacity, pavement evaluation, development of expert systems as applied to geotechnical engineering, uses of computers for prediction of performance, design and use of soil reinforcement methods for retaining walls, and many other developments of theory and applications. His most recent research interests were in expert systems, geotextiles, soil reinforcement, pavement evaluation, and foundations.

He was an excellent teacher, not only for his organization and presentation of the material, but for his ability to demonstrate the relationships between theory and practice, as well as the importance of learning from experience. All of the Technion staff and students were particularly appreciative of his professional competence, ability to contribute to all activities, interact smoothly with others, and command respect from all. His students

and associates were enthusiastic about working with him, and heart-broken to hear of his passing. He was sought after by many people to contribute advice and help in professional as well as personal matters.

Gdalyah had been active in consulting activities in the field of soil mechanics and foundation engineering since 1955. In addition to a wide variety of projects in Israel, he also undertook short-term consulting assignments abroad in Canada, the USA, Brazil, Cameroun, Malaysia, Iran and Thailand. Typical projects included: airfield pavements, road and railway embankments, bulk storage facilities, waterfront structures, earth dams, and industrial and commercial buildings. Much of his consulting activities was executed within the framework of his participation as a director of the consulting engineer group Soil Engineering, Ltd, which included Professor Joseph G. Zeitlen and Professor Amos Komornik.

We have all particularly appreciated his participation and contributions to various geotechnical associations; he was, for many years on the committee of the Israel Geotechnical Society, and he served as Vice President for the Asian Region of the International Society for Soil Mechanics and Foundation Engineering (ISSMFE) from 1985 to 1989, which in 1986 included Israel, Syria, Iran, Pakistan, India, China, Indonesia, Japan, and South-East Asia (Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Taiwan and Hong Kong).

Dr Wiseman is survived by his wife, Esther, his daughters Navah, Hadassah and Daphne, and his son, Shai, and their families.

—J. G. Zeitlen & S. Frydman

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