

Obituary

Dr. A. Raymond Boyle

To many of his colleagues Dr. Boyle will always be known as the 'father' of Automated Cartography. From the experimental 'Oxford System' demonstrated in 1964, to the operational automated drafting system installed in the Canadian Hydrographic Service in 1971, as well as other systems provided to US agencies, and an innovative Geographic Information System (GIS) completed in 1975, Dr. Boyle developed many key components that laid a foundation for digital mapping and charting. He held patents on digitizing systems, light head drafting tools and his innovation had no bounds. After joining the Electrical Engineering Department of the University of Saskatchewan in 1965, he had opportunities to combine his love of teaching and research. Some of the topics investigated through his graduate students included automated line following, character recognition, interactive map and chart compilation, geospatial data compression, data storage and data management. After retiring from the university he continued his development efforts which included a successful, low cost GIS, suitable for use by municipal governments, students, and general users.

In hydrography, 1967 was a turning point for the Canadian Hydrographic Service (CHS), as it embarked on innovative programs for moving hydrography into the digital computer domain. The CHS partnered with Dr. Boyle, who became the central figure in developing a long term vision and guiding the development of the associated technology which, except for the emergence of the 'naked' mini-computer, did not exist at that time. Under Dr. Boyle, a team of two engineers from the CHS, and several graduate students was assembled to build the hardware and software components needed for operational cartographic digitizing and drafting systems which were delivered and implemented in 1971, the beginning of a new era for Canada.

The energetic and unstoppable pragmatic approaches demonstrated by Dr. Boyle, combined with innovative and long term visions were unique and will be greatly missed by all those who had the privilege and opportunity to be associated with him.