

## In Memoriam

James P. Morgan

At the age of 75, James P. Morgan died peacefully in his Pensacola Beach home in Florida on August 26, 1995 after a short, gallant battle against cancer. His parting has shocked and greatly saddened the academic community, a community that marvelled and paid tribute to his intellectual abilities.

Born in Beaumont, Texas, in 1919, James Plummer Morgan showed a love for the earth and the environment at a very young age. Consequently, it was not at all surprising to his family when he won a scholarship to read for a degree in Geology at the University of California (Berkeley). After degree completion, he joined the U.S. Air Force as an aerial photo interpreter and intelligence officer, and it was during this time that he realized his love for the coast. In 1946, he and his wife Dorothy moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where the young J. P. Morgan had received a scholarship from the late Professor R. J. Russell to study sedimentary processes in coastal Louisiana. This was indeed an exciting time at Louisiana State University, where Russell, a student of William Morris Davis, was testing, or more appropriately refuting the Davisian cycle, and vigorously developing the departments of Geography and Geology with the late Professor Henry Howe. Morgan joined the group, and was funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to research diapiric structures and the infamous mudlumps as a major part of his doctoral research.

On completion of his Ph.D. in 1949, Morgan remained at LSU and began developing a strong professional relationship with Russell. Their research began unveiling some startling evidence that the Louisiana coast and highly productive marshes were disappearing at alarmingly high rates. The concern generated by their preliminary findings, culminated in the funding of a bold proposal in 1951 to develop a world-class institute, staffed with top scientists to study the coastal erosion and marsh loss problem in Louisiana. Two years after having received his doctorate, and at the ripe old age of 34, Morgan was named Managing Director of this prestigious institute.

With several scientists vigorously working in the delta under the supervision of "chief" as he was known at the time, Morgan and Russell and other institute members began establishing an international research program. Funding was secured for projects conducted in the Bengal Basin, Caribbean, Brazil, Uruguay, and at home in the Gulf of Mexico, Massachusetts, the Outer Banks of North Carolina and Florida. Funding was received from the National Science Foundation, United States Geological Survey, Office of Naval Research, and several oil companies, to name but a few.

Dr. Morgan's research record was nothing short of exemplary at a young age and the oil companies frequently attempted to lure him from academia with the promise of embarrassingly-high salaries and assorted perks. He resisted industry for he relished the challenge of teaching in the lecture room and had become devoted to the Coastal Studies Institute and LSU. His meritorious teaching and research were rewarded in 1962 when he was promoted to full professor of geology. In 1966 he stepped down from the directorship of Coastal Studies, to become leading scientist on research funded by the National Science Foundation and the United States Geological Survey, conducted on the Louisiana continental shelf. Towards the end of the project in 1970, he accepted chairmanship of the department of Geology, a position he held until 1973.

Dr. Morgan had spent almost 30 years at LSU. After stepping down as chair, he took sabbatical leave to write-up some of the data he had generated during his continental shelf research. He and his wife spent most of that time on Pensacola Beach, Florida, where they developed a love for the area and made several new friends. That sabbatical helped solidify the decision for retirement from LSU, and after 30 years in Baton Rouge, the Morgan family said good-bye to LSU and their many close friends and relocated to Pensacola.

In 1977 Dr. Morgan joined the faculty in the earth sciences program at The University of West Florida where he taught coastal processes and sedimentation. And although he insisted that he had "retired" from academia, he was largely responsible for establishing the Institute for Coastal and Estuarine

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Research at UWF in the late 1980's, and remained active in research and teaching until his health began failing in 1994. In April 1995, the University of West Florida showed its appreciation for his contributions to the coast by establishing the *James P. Morgan Research Award* for significant contributions to our understanding of coastal systems in the Gulf of Mexico. This was one of many rewards he had received over the years, but one that he noticeably cherished during the last few months of his life.

James P. Morgan will be remembered by many for his significant contributions to science and education. He will be remembered by the Florida and Louisiana communities for his active participation in environmental matters. He will be remembered by friends for his humor, humility, kindness and warmth. He will be remembered by his family as a steadfast father and devoted husband. And he will be fondly remembered by me, a former student, for the remainder of my life. Thank you for the knowledge, friendship and caring you have shown me over the last 15 years. Although your parting brings to a close another wonderful chapter in the history of coastal research, your name will echo in the halls of LSU for eternity.

Gregory W. Stone  
Louisiana State University  
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