

this document downloaded from

# vulcanhammer.info

the website about  
Vulcan Iron Works  
Inc. and the pile  
driving equipment it  
manufactured

Visit our companion site  
<http://www.vulcanhammer.org>

## Terms and Conditions of Use:

All of the information, data and computer software ("information") presented on this web site is for general information only. While every effort will be made to insure its accuracy, this information should not be used or relied on for any specific application without independent, competent professional examination and verification of its accuracy, suitability and applicability by a licensed professional. Anyone making use of this information does so at his or her own risk and assumes any and all liability resulting from such use. The entire risk as to quality or usability of the information contained within is with the reader. In no event will this web page or webmaster be held liable, nor does this web page or its webmaster provide insurance against liability, for any damages including lost profits, lost savings or any other incidental or consequential damages arising from the use or inability to use the information contained within.

This site is not an official site of Prentice-Hall, Pile Buck, or Vulcan Foundation Equipment. All references to sources of software, equipment, parts, service or repairs do not constitute an endorsement.

From - Thu Aug 7 13:58:02 2003

Received: from mpls-qmqp-03.inet.qwest.net (mpls-qmqp-03.inet.qwest.net

This email is sent on behalf of Mr. S. Scot Litke, ADSC Executive Director. This column will appear in the August issue of FD magazine. We thought this might be appropriate for your reflections book. We will be sure to send a few a copies of mentioned magazine to you when it published.

Susan King for Scot Litke

ADSC  
P.O. Box 550339  
Dallas, TX 75455-0339  
(214) 343-2091  
FAX (214) 343-2384

### **Dr. Michael O'Neill Passes Away; We Are Not Ready**

Where were you when you got the news that Dr. Michael O'Neill had died? For me that question ranks right up there with the very same that has been asked about John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King. It is even more profound for me, for while I admired both legendary figures in this nation's history, I did not have a personal relationship with either. I did with "Dr. O" as we at the ADSC headquarters called him. My call came from ADSC Past President, and current President of the Geo-Institute, Alan Macnab. It was 7:30 am on Monday, August 4<sup>th</sup>. I was in Whistler, British Columbia, having just completed the ADSC's 2003 Summer Meeting and getting ready to leave for the Vancouver airport. The message was very simple. "Scot have you been in touch with your office this morning," Alan asked. "No," I replied. "Mike O'Neill died of an apparent heart attack in his home on Saturday." That was all I needed to hear, and all I can remember of that dreaded phone call. My reaction was thorough shock, followed immediately by feelings of deep, deep sorrow, and an overwhelming sense of loss. It couldn't be, but nonetheless it was so. All of us who knew Mike knew his health had been an issue for many years, but somehow we just never thought that he would succumb; after all he was only 63.

This is not the *Editor's Note* column I had written for this issue of *Foundation Drilling Magazine*. The August issue had been "put to bed" weeks ago. This is not a column I relish writing. I would much prefer to be reporting on yet another mutually successful research or training venture the ADSC had just completed in conjunction with "Dr. O," for during the 21 years of my tenure in this seat there have been many. All of that changed on that sun-filled morning in the magnificent mountains of British Columbia. Dr. Michael O'Neill had died, and the professional world in which I/we live would never be the same.

I returned to the ADSC office on Tuesday morning, August 5<sup>th</sup>. The email, phone, and fax wires were already buzzing with notices of Mike's passing. His vast engineering credits were being recounted from a variety of noted sources. Rather than reiterating Mike's illustrious career, I prefer to focus on what he meant to the ADSC, to the drilled shaft industry, to all that had the privilege (and a privilege it was) to have worked with him, to have known him as a colleague, and as a friend. The ultimate irony is while I was away Mike had sent me several emails on a variety of subjects in which we were currently engaged. He was to participate in an ADSC South Central

Chapter meeting with the Texas DOT in a few weeks, and was clearing his calendar to be able to attend. The last message I received from him mentioned that he was scheduled for an “outpatient procedure on August 5<sup>th</sup>”. Perhaps if he had been able to make it through that terrible weekend-event they would have been able to intervene in what was his final bout with a weakened heart. That is too troubling for me to deal with right now as I lost my own father in a similar fashion.

So let’s talk about Mike. He was a prolific writer whose many monographs, research reports, and manuals on the subject of Drilled Shaft design, construction, and testing forms the core to the ADSC’s Technical Library in that subject area. He was an indefatigable traveler literally covering the globe sharing his considerable wisdom. Mike was the backbone of many of the ADSC’s educational efforts, being a featured presenter at over 100 drilled shaft design and construction seminars under the ADSC umbrella, and in conjunction with the FHWA’s National Highway Institute. I personally traveled with Mike all over the United States, and in Canada. He bounded from Europe to Asia influencing geotechnical engineering thinking on every continent in between. As his health began to fail, he continued on without respite. Perhaps he knew better than all of us that he didn’t have much time. And as we all knew, he had so much to share.

Mike was equally at home presenting the prestigious Terzaghi Lecture to an auditorium full of geotechnical engineers as he was teaching the subtleties of slurry construction to ADSC member firm field personnel. He was one of my personal mentors. I sat in on every one of his lectures at ADSC drilled shaft design seminars. I really started to worry when I realized that I understood everything he was saying (almost). While you don’t want to be traveling over any bridge whose drilled foundations I designed, you can rest assured that my comprehension of axial and lateral load, the performance of mineral and polymer slurries, soil-structure interaction, finite elements analysis, and similar engineering fundamentals is soundly based in good part on what I gleaned from “Dr. O”.

Mike was someone who could never say “No”. Anytime I flashed off an email to him asking for his brief opinion on a subject, I received an expanded response almost immediately. Every time the ADSC needed help in a research area, and educational program, or support for a regional Chapter’s initiative with a particular State Department of Transportation, Dr. O’Neill was there to assist. I particularly enjoyed his phone calls. Even after our working closely together for nearly 20 years he would introduce himself by saying, “Hello, Scot, this is Dr. Michael O’Neill from the University of Houston (as if I didn’t know) I know that you are busy, but I wanted to talk to you about something that may be relevant”. Then he would launch into a concise discussion on some topic of definite importance to the drilled shaft industry.

Mike was wonderful partner for the drilled shaft industry. His seminal research in drilled shaft design and performance moved the industry forward dramatically, as had the work of “his” mentor Dr. Lymon Reese before him. Mike did his undergraduate, Masters, and PhD work under Dr. Reese at the University of Texas, yet Mike is mostly closely associated with the University of Houston, which was clearly “his school”. The ADSC and its members supported much of Dr. O’Neill’s research work at the University of Houston’s geotechnical engineering testing site. His work there led to the site’s being selected as one of the first National Geotechnical Experimentation Sites initially originally funded by the FHWA and now under the direction of the Geo Council. Unfortunately, university expansion caused the site to be closed. The value of his work there in

studying drilled shaft performance as it relates to slurries, Nondestructive Evaluation, soil-structure interaction in expansive soil, and much, much more, lives on, as does his research work conducted throughout the U.S.

Those of us who knew Mike knew that below that most amenable manner lived a man who knew where he stood on every issue. Serving with Mike on a number of Geo-Institute, Geo Council, and FHWA research committees provided me with a first hand understanding of Mike's commitment to his personal craft and to his profession. As a dedicated professional he never shied away of being critical of geotechnical engineers when it came to a tendency to rely on theory rather than field experience. He was equally at home in a laboratory or climbing around a construction site, at times getting too close to the action. But, that's another story. He often apologized to construction site field personnel and to ADSC company leaders for being "just a professor". Just a professor my steel-toed boots! Although I must say, the first time I observed Dr. "O" showing up at a field site in loafers I did have to wonder. I remarked about this one time while sitting under the shade of a load test H-beam. Mike responded, "That's OK, I always wear these in the field." I should have known. And while Mike took his work very seriously, he was never above making fun of himself. His dry wit often caught those around him off guard, another engaging part of his complex personality. He willingly shared the spotlight with all those who worked with him and gave credit where credit was due. Mike was genuinely appreciative of everything that was done for him. He was profuse in his praise when praise was due. The ADSC staff adored him. ADSC members truly *liked*, as well as respected him. One could not help but become a better professional by being part of his world.

At the ADSC and ASCE's Geo-Institute mega conference to be held in Orlando Florida, in February of next year, Dr. O'Neill was to be honored as the geo-engineering and geo-construction industry's "Hero". In that capacity he was to join industry giants Dr. Ralph Peck, Dr. Jim Mitchell, and John Focht. We kept this from Mike in a desire to try to surprise him at that event. Now I am sorry that we did not share this with him in advance. He should have known how he was revered by his colleagues. Mike was a deep thinker, an innovator, an educator, a consummate professional.

I could go on and on about "Dr. O," listing his many contributions to geotechnical engineering research, deep foundation design, his extensive professional honors, his 200 published papers, and his contributions to geotechnical engineering education, as the "list" is a long one indeed. Suffice to say, Dr. Michael O'Neill, Cullen Distinguished Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Houston, Houston, Texas, is one of the most important and influential individuals in the history of the drilled shaft foundation industry.

On my drive back to Vancouver I was struck by the majestic mountains alive with their powerful glaciers slowly and profoundly changing the region's geologic features, a place where mountain peak meets the sky. An apt metaphor for where our "Dr. O" now resides.

He is gone far too soon. We are not ready.

S. Scot Litke, Editor

From - Thu Aug 7 13:55:52 2003

Received: from mta4.rcsntx.swbell.net (mta4.rcsntx.swbell.net [151.164.30.28])

I met Michael O'Neill when he came from San Antonio to The University of Texas in the late 1950's. He selected civil engineering as his major and the Department was eager to retain the best students until graduation and instituted the Freshman Honors Program. Mike was one of the first members in the program. He received a gift of a slide rule, was invited to special seminars, and was a special guest to meetings of the Austin Branch of the American Society of Civil Engineers. It was the good fortune of the Department, and mine especially, that Mike remained a civil engineer.

Under my direction, but mostly on his own initiative, Mike completed a Master's Degree in May 1964 and a PhD in December 1970, after serving for two years in the United States Army. The topic for his MS and PhD was the behavior of deep foundations under combined loading, a topic that Mike continued to follow with distinction throughout his career. He was an internationally known expert in the area of deep foundations. He delivered lectures worldwide and extensively in the United States. He received many awards from the American Society of Civil Engineers, from the Deep Foundations Institute, and from ADSC-International Association of Foundation Drilling. He was slated to receive the award of GeoHero from the Geo-Institute of ASCE at a forthcoming meeting. It was my privilege to nominate him for membership in the National Academy of Engineering, the most prestigious society for engineers in the U.S. Based on messages of support from many distinguished engineers, I believe his membership was assured.

One of the most recent achievements of Dr. O'Neill was as principal author of the book *Drilled Shafts: Construction Procedures and Design Methods*, sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration. The document has been accepted as the guideline for the majority of an entire foundation industry in the U.S. and is expected to be important internationally.

Beyond his technical accomplishments, Mike's personal characteristics were superb. He was always pleasant, kind, and generous. I worked with him on technical and professional matters over his entire adult life and am unable to recall even one incident where we had a heated conversation. I met Mike many times in recent years; the last one was in early July this year when he lectured in a short course in Austin. I never met him without a feeling of pleasure. Mike's untimely death is a severe blow to the civil engineering profession and to me personally. I am deeply saddened and extend my deep-felt condolences to his wife and son.

Lymon C. Reese

Ode to  
Mike W. O'Neill  
by  
Frank C. Townsend, Professor  
University of Florida, Gainesville, FL  
[ftown@ce.ufl.edu](mailto:ftown@ce.ufl.edu)

Although I was on vacation at Sanibel Island, FL, the sad news reached me through the incredible communication world we now live in. An e-mail posting over the Internet reached all members of ASCE's Deep Foundations Committee (of which MWO was a member). Former graduate student, Dr. Anderson, knowing I was on vacation and would not receive that e-mail for 2 weeks, merely dialed my cell phone leaving a message --- Call me! Returning his call, I learned of Mike's passing due to heart failure. Although I had known of Mike's heart condition—I was and still am not prepared to know he is gone.

Whereas Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us; “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die” Certainly, God knows when that time will be, but for me it is difficult to accept that Mike's time had arrived and I will miss him. It is customary for those of us remaining on Earth to share memories of a departed friend in an effort that his life will not be forgotten --- I'd like to share some memories and impressions, any inaccuracies are not intended.

I knew MWO prior to meeting him through his many ASCE & TRB publications, etc., but our friendship became more acute after 1988 when he presented a FHWA short course on the Design and Construction of Drilled Shafts in Orlando. Drilled shaft technology was just beginning in Florida and Mike clearly was the world's leading expert, so the course quickly brought me “up to speed”. After that meeting, we became quite involved via ASCE activities: Highlights include:

- a. Terzaghi Lecture – Boston Oct '98. MWO in typical fashion gave a practical engineering lecture that we all could understand and use.
- b. Ardaman Lecture – Univ of Florida Oct '94. Mike came to UF and gave the Ardaman lecture. We had a great dinner afterwards and my wife was able to meet Mike.
- c. TRB – DC – Mike and I decided to play “hooky” from the technical sessions one afternoon and escaped to the Washington zoo to see the Pandas. I was happy to share Mike's company and conversation as we strolled the paths of the zoo.
- d. Pile workshop – WES Vicksburg, MS July '93. The Corps held a 2-day deep foundations workshop,. MWO and I were invited “experts”. At that time, Mike was adjusting his medications for his heart and the dosage was incorrect. I could tell he wasn't feeling well, as he “begged off” from the dinner to get some bed rest. At that time he told me of his heart problem. Despite not feeling well, he courageously continued the following day's presentations.
- e. Orlando 2002 – ASCE Deep Foundations Mike and I are the co-editors of the Proceedings. Two years of planning, e-mails, preconference meetings, phone calls, etc. Mike set-up all the spreadsheets for the papers, etc. and assumed the lead role thus assuring the proceedings would be a success. Sadly, the conference arrives and Mike has the shingles and cannot attend.

- f. FHWA \_ PSC Project '91-95. Mike and I were co-PI's for this project
- g. Once at Texas A&M conference – Mike went out of his way to drive me in his sports car the airport. A reflection on his concern for others and always ready to do a favor.

Mike and I share common backgrounds—born in 1940, military service and received the Army commendation medal for our efforts, GI bill for higher education – PhD's and into academia. Consequently his passing causes me to pause and reflect.

Despite his many awards and international acclaim, MWO was always humble. He always found time to answer my e-mails or phone calls, and provide me with guidance both personal and technical. For these kindnesses I'll always be grateful and remember him.

Mike's many awards are well deserved and not politically given, consequently there is no envy but only happiness and respect for him.

Mike was a true gentlemen, a giant in our field, professor, leader, teacher, colleague, and friend. Whenever I see a bridge foundation or think of drilled shafts forever I'll remember Mike O'Neill and I will miss him --- Peace.

---

From - Tue Aug 26 11:29:24 2003

Received: from mpls-qmqp-03.inet.qwest.net (mpls-qmqp-03.inet.qwest.net [63.231.195.114])

Hi, my name is Susan Starr King, and I work for ADSC: The International Association of Foundation Drilling, of which Dr. O'Neill was an Honorary Technical Affiliate Member. Although he repeated requested me to do so, I never could bring myself to call him "Mike," as I had/have too much respect for him, so I began to call him "Dr O." I got to know Dr. O very well when he and I worked on a FHWA Drilled Shaft Seminar series for State DOTs in the late '80s. His wife, Jeri, was a tremendous help during that time too. Through the years, I've called on him for information, and he's called on the ADSC too. We all made a great team.

Dr. O is a tremendous influence in drilled shaft design and construction, and will continue to be even after his death. His research, teaching, and giving will be a contribution to his beloved industry long after his passing.

We've lost a mentor, teacher, and friend. Thanks for everything, Dr O. I only hope you knew how much we respected, appreciated, and loved you!

Susan King  
ADSC Executive Secretary  
Dallas, TX

From - Tue Aug 5 12:10:17 2003

Received: from hous0026.amers.ibechtel.com (hou-gate.bechtel.com [4.19.6.60])

An open letter to Prof. Michael O'Neill

Dearest Prof. O'Neill,

My heart is full of sorrow, my eyes full of tears; I am deeply saddened, but words cannot describe how I feel.

Your loss has left a huge vacuum that will never be filled.

You have touched the lives of all who worked with you, learned from you, or dealt with you.

Your life exemplified dedication, excellence, warmth and righteousness...

I am very fortunate and honored to have worked closely with you, learning from you on a daily basis how to be a better person in all aspects.

Not only were you exceptional and a leader in your field, you led by example of excellence, hard work and dedication.

I am truly a better person because of you.

You spared no means in helping others, including myself, in their endeavors.

You planted the seeds of selfless hard work in all your students, and your legacy shall be carried on throughout their lives.

You have all our love and your memory will live with us so long as we dwell on this earth.

May you rest now in a better place, and when you look down on us, you will know how much we love you and miss you.

May peace be upon you

Yours forever,

Hazem Sarhan

From - Tue Aug 5 12:10:51 2003  
Received: from srvwww.gaiconsultants.com (mail.gaiconsultants.com)

I am so sorry to read about Dr. O'Neill's untimely passing. Dr. O'Neill was an outstanding professional and contributed significantly to our field. His Terzaghi lecture presentation in Pittsburgh is remembered by many.

May he rest in peace.

With deepest sympathy,

Cathy  
N. Catherine Bazán-Arias, Ph.D., E.I.T.  
Staff Engineer-in-Training  
GAI Consultants, Inc.  
570 Beatty Road  
Monroeville, PA 15146  
412.856.6400 (office)  
412.856.4970 (fax)  
n.bazan-arias@gaiconsultants.com  
www.gaiconsultants.com

---

From - Tue Aug 5 11:52:50 2003  
Received: from shell.ce.ufl.edu (shell.ce.ufl.edu [128.227.72.103])

No one's death comes to pass without making some impression, and those close to the deceased inherit part of the liberated soul and become richer in their humaneness.

Hermann Broch (1886-1951) Austrian novelist

condolences,

dave bloomquist  
University of Florida

---

From - Tue Aug 5 12:12:40 2003  
Received: from Eng.Auburn.EDU (dns.eng.auburn.edu [131.204.10.13])

I first met Mike when I was a grad student at Texas. I had heard a lot of stories about him at UT and was eager to meet him. I got the chance to work with Mike on my PhD project 20 years ago, which involved pile group testing at the U of H test site. He served on my PhD committee, and was really instrumental in my success on this project. Throughout my subsequent career in geotechnical engineering, Mike more than anyone else has served as my mentor and advisor. Since we were always working on similar topics, he could have perceived me as a rival; but he always sought to help and his advise and counsel have been invaluable. Whenever I was faced with a difficult problem, it was Mike O'Neill to whom I turned for help.

I will miss him very much. He was more than a colleague and mentor in professional things, he was a friend and a true gentleman. I owe a debt to Mike O'Neill that can never be repaid. His memory will always remain with me.

Dan Brown  
Auburn Univ.  
UT class of 1985

All of Mike's friends in Sydney, and particularly the University of Sydney, Australia, joint with me in expressing our sympathy to the O'Neill family at this sad time. Mike was widely respected, much liked and hugely admired by his many friends and colleagues downunder. While he will be sadly missed, his numerous contributions to our profession of geotechnical engineering will endure.

John Carter

---

John Carter  
Challis Professor of Civil Engineering  
Department of Civil Engineering,  
University of Sydney  
NSW 2006  
AUSTRALIA  
PH: 02-9351 2299  
FX: 02-9351 3343  
Email: J.Carter@civil.usyd.edu.au  
Web: <http://www.civil.usyd.edu.au/people/carter.htm>

---

From - Tue Aug 5 12:12:21 2003  
Received: from smtp03.mrf.mail.rcn.net (smtp03.mrf.mail.rcn.net [207.172.4.62])

I was profoundly shocked to learn of Mike O'Neill's death. It is a clich=E9 of our time that we refer to a death as "untimely," but Mike's surely was untimely in all the senses of that word. His technical work was always the best. In my interactions with him on professional issues, I always found him careful, informed, courteous, and thoughtful. He was a true gentleman and will be missed by all his colleagues.

John T. Christian  
23 Fredana Road  
Waban, MA 02468  
Tel: 617-244-0760  
Fax: 617-244-0816  
e-mail: christian1@rcn.com

---

From - Tue Aug 5 12:14:55 2003  
Received: from erebus.ecs.syr.edu (ecs.syr.edu [128.230.208.14])

Dear Family, Friends and Colleagues,  
I am so sorry to learn that one of truly great educators and engineers in the field of geotechnical engineering has passed away. Michael was a true gentleman and scholar---I remember meeting him many years ago in Houston and he was always so gracious and kind to everyone in the profession , regardless of whether you were an important researcher or just an ordinary member of the geotechnical community.  
He was truly one of a kind and we will all miss him.  
Sam Clemence

Samuel P. Clemence  
Laura J. and L. Douglas Meredith Professor for Teaching Excellence  
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering  
L. C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science  
220 Hinds Hall  
Syracuse University  
Syracuse, New York 13244-1190  
Tel; 315 443-2554  
Fax; 315 443-1243  
E-mail:spclemen@syr.edu

---

From - Tue Aug 5 12:10:29 2003  
Received: from mail.hatchmott.com (mail.hatchmott.com [66.134.174.196])

As a geotechnical engineer, I wish to express my gratitude for Mike's contributions to the field of geotechnical engineering. I regretably did not have time to know Mike personally, but have been influenced by his work.

I have had the pleasure of attending Mike's lectures and presentations to the professional geotechnical engineering community. Mike always brought a light-hearted tone to a serious presentation or discussion and left the room more the wiser and well-educated for his time. Mike's work made us all more informed as he advanced the start-of-the-art and contributed to the sum of human knowledge.

I am the better for having been influenced by Mike's life and I will profoundly miss his presence .

Please except my most sincere sympathies on Mike's passing.

---

Randall C. Divito, P.E.  
Project Engineer  
Hatch Mott MacDonald  
Transportation and Tunnels  
16600 Sprague Road, Suite 445  
Cleveland, OH 44130  
Tel.: 440.243.8028  
Tel.: 678.333.0528 (JJG Atlanta)  
Fax: 440.243.8021  
Cell: 216.406.0816  
Email: randall.divito@hatchmott.com

From - Tue Aug 5 12:11:19 2003  
Received: from curly.cive.uh.edu (localhost [127.0.0.1])

We've lost a great friend and colleague in Mike O'Neill. He was such a giving man and will be missed in so many ways. I've been reminded so many times the past few days that he is no longer with us. I miss hearing the jingle of the coins in his pockets as he would walk through the halls of the department, or the familiar creak of his desk chair that I could hear through his office door that was always wide open for students and colleagues to pop in and ask a question. I keep expecting to walk by the coffee maker and see him there offering a friendly greeting while he fills his cup.

I've already caught myself standing up from my office chair to go and ask him a question regarding a TxDOT report. Mike was always the first person that I went to for advice. I always valued his opinion because he never sugarcoated anything or told you what he thought you wanted to hear. He just gave you his honest, heartfelt opinion - and I always found it invaluable. I will miss standing in the doorway of his office and talking about personal, technical or academic issues.

Mike played such an important mentoring role to me since I came to the department in 1994. He gave me advice on research, student supervision, teaching, and so many other issues. I remember 4 years ago feeling so pleased when I found out that he was the departmental representative on the college committee for Promotion and Tenure when my case for tenure was going to be presented. Tenure is such a nervous issue with young faculty, and Mike always treated his role on these committees with such focus and responsibility.

Our department is going to severely miss the strong example that Mike exhibited in character and selflessness. He served in whatever capacity he was asked to serve in, and always put in 100%. We are going to miss his leadership and vision. As we try to adjust to the void that is left in his absence, I hope that many of us can follow his example of selflessness and giving. To steal the commercial phrase, I truly hope that we can try to Be Like Mike!

I pray for Mike's family as they get through this difficult time. I hope that they take comfort in the knowledge that although his life on earth wasn't as long as we would have liked, the life that he lived had such a dramatic impact on the lives of so many students, friends, and colleagues.

Sincerely,  
Todd Helwig

---

Todd A. Helwig  
Associate Professor of Civil Engineering  
University of Houston  
Dept. of Civil & Environmental Engineering  
N107 Engineering Bldg 1  
Houston, Tx. 77204-4003  
Phone - (713) 743-4284 Fax - (713) 743-4260  
Email - todd@curly.cive.uh.edu

---

From - Tue Aug 5 12:11:20 2003

Received: from mail26b.sbc-webhosting.com (mail26b.sbc-webhosting.com)

To the family of Dr. Michael O'Neill,

This is a very sad day for you all. My dad passed away a few years ago, so I know the sorrow and hurt that you are experiencing now.

But this is a very sad day for me too because Dr. O'Neill had a great influence on my career. I took my first Geotechnical Engineering course at the University of Houston under Dr. O'Neill in 1974. He had just returned to teaching after being in the consulting practice with Southwestern Laboratories in Houston. "Wow! What a great professor!" I said to myself. "This guy is good. He communicates well, he puts the subject matter in real life situations, and yet he is very technical."

Up to this time, I was not sure what specialty of civil engineering I wanted to pursue. Mid-way through the semester, he asked if anyone in the class was interested in working part-time for Southwestern Laboratories while going to school. I told him I was interested and he gave me the contact person. By this time, I was excited about being a Geotechnical Engineer. Now with the ability to have real 'hands on' experience, I was on my way. I went on to get my Masters degree with the 'urging and counseling' of Dr. O'Neill. I never looked back and have never regreted it.

He was my mentor. He taught me how to be a good practical engineer. He taught me how to be ethical. He taught me integrity. Because of his teaching and mentoring, I was able to start my own business 11 years ago. My practical approach, which Dr. O'Neill taught me, is the philosophy that I base my business. This has earned me the trust and loyalty of many customers. I have called on him many times to consult on projects with us, and each time, I learned something new.

I will miss him. Our Geotechnical Engineering community will miss him. I know you will miss him.

My prayers and thoughts are with you and your family.

Sincerely,  
Chester Drash

Chester J. Drash, P. E.  
Executive Vice President/Principal  
Drash Consulting Engineers, Inc.  
4926 Research Drive  
San Antonio, Texas 78240  
cdrash@drashce.com  
Telephone: (210) 641-2112  
Facsimile: (210) 558-7894

From - Tue Aug 5 12:15:26 2003

Received: from pigpen.sbec.com (pigpen.sbec.com [207.243.125.253])

Professor O'Neill was an inspiration to me while attending college at the University of Houston. He was truly very excited about the work he was doing and that got everyone he taught excited about his classes. After I graduated I attended a course he taught through the Federal Highway Administration. As usual his effort was outstanding. His ability to teach was a gift that not all teachers have. He could take a complex subject and present it in a way that everyone could understand. He was an inspiration to me and many of my colleagues. I will miss him.

Douglas E. Emery, P.E.  
Chief Highway Engineer

---

From - Tue Aug 5 12:12:15 2003

Received: from galaxy.civil.usyd.edu.au (galaxy.civil.usyd.edu.au [129.78.142.62])

>>

>>George,

>>

>>Please pass on Cardno MBK's condolences to Mike's family, and to his >>friends within the department. We are sorry to hear of this news.

>>

>>Regards,

>>Irene

>>

>>George Slack wrote:

>>>

>>>Those of us who knew and respected Mike O'Neill will be saddened by this >>>news. He was a very welcome visitor to this Department and a major >>>contributor to short courses sponsored by the Civil Engineering >>>Foundation. > Challis Professor John Carter

>>>

>>>George

>>>

>>>

>>

>>--

>>Regards

>>

>>Irene Scott

>>Senior Bridge Engineer

>>

>>Cardno MBK

>>Level 3, 910 Pacific Highway

>>GORDON NSW 2072

>>

>>Direct Line: 02 9496 7732

>>Mobile: 0421 615 472

>>Switch: 02 9496 7700

>>Fax: 02 9499 3902

>>

I have had the honor of working with Prof. O'Neill on a number of major projects and always respected and admired him for his knowledge, competency and especially his integrity.

He has made an enviable contribution to the advancement of Geotechnology.

I send my sincere sympathy to his family.

Ben Gerwick  
BEN C. GERWICK, JR.  
Ben C. Gerwick, Inc.  
Consulting Engineers  
20 California Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94111  
Tel. 415.398.8972  
Direct 415.288.2730  
Fax. 415.398.0433  
E-mail [bcg@gerwick.com](mailto:bcg@gerwick.com)  
Website <http://www.gerwick.com>

From - Tue Aug 5 15:00:57 2003  
Received: from Post-Office.UH.EDU (NS3.UH.EDU [129.7.1.20])

Mike the Leader, Scholar and Mentor

I knew of Professor Michael W. O'Neill first as an author of leading papers in drilled shafts and other pile foundations, where his findings were used in my graduate work. For the past 19 years he was my mentor and colleague at the University of Houston. It was really a privilege and honor to have worked with a world-renowned researcher on pile foundations who respected you for your talent. He was a visionary and had the knack for assembling successful research teams to address complex problems. An icon in the area of pile foundation research, Mike was a tireless and fearless researcher who had the appreciation for both theoretical modeling and full-scale experimental verification, a unique and rare combination which was the trade mark of Professor O'Neill. He was a hard worker and approached the problem at hand in a multi-dimensional way to search for the solutions and leaves no stone unturned. He had pioneered number of research work in the area of pile foundations over three decades and I had the privilege of working with him on vibratory pile driving, drilled shafts and most recently auger cast in-place piles. It was a delightful and enlightening experience for me to work with Mike and I will truly miss him. I had the honor of coauthoring number of papers with Professor O'Neill.

---

C. Vipulanandan (Vipu), Ph.D., P.E.  
Chairman and Professor of Civil Engineering  
Director of Center for Innovative Grouting Materials and Technology (CIGMAT)  
University of Houston  
4800 Calhoun, Engineering Bldg. 1  
Houston, Texas 77204-4003  
Phone: (713) 743-4278  
Fax: (713) 743-4260  
URL: <http://cigmat.cive.uh.edu>

---

From - Tue Aug 5 11:52:16 2003  
Received: from green.eng.utoledo.edu (green.eng.utoledo.edu [131.183.18.5])

To the family and friends of Mike O'Neill,

I will forever be grateful to Mike O'Neill for providing me the opportunity to complete an advanced degree at the UH. Mike distinguished himself by his outstanding ability to observe a large amount of information without missing even the smallest detail in order to arrive at sound conclusions. The energy and drive that he put into his work serves as an example to me to this day. I still find it difficult to 'sneak out of the office early' even on a Friday afternoon.

Andrew Heydinger  
(Ph.D., 1982)

---

Andrew G. Heydinger, Ph.D., P.E.  
Mail Stop 307  
Department of Civil Engineering  
The University of Toledo  
Toledo, OH 43606-3390 USA  
(419) 530 8133 (Voice)  
(419) 530 8116 (Fax) E-mail: aheyding@eng.utoledo.edu  
<http://www.eng.utoledo.edu/civil/heydinger/heyd.html>  
For Express Delivery:  
The University of Toledo  
Nitschke Hall Room 3031  
2801 West Bancroft Street  
Toledo, Ohio 43606-3390

From - Tue Aug 5 12:10:41 2003  
Received: from imo-r04.mx.aol.com (imo-r04.mx.aol.com [152.163.225.100])

Good-bye dear friend, may God bless your soul.

Mohamad Hussein  
Orlando, Florida

From - Tue Aug 5 11:58:23 2003  
Received: from pickering.cc.nd.edu (pickering.cc.nd.edu [129.74.250.225])

I am saddened to learn about Mike!

When I joined UH, he was the main pillar of the CE Dept at UH who single handedly through his technical and professional contributions kept the department afloat in late seventies and thereafter.

Besides his scholarly accomplishments which placed UH CE Department on the map, he really cared for the University and always sincerely wished well for the department.

I always enjoyed talking to him in late evenings about potpourri of things and he was always very engaging and helpful.

When I left UH in 1990 for Notre Dame, he gave me a toy wind tunnel as a going away present just in case Notre Dame could not afford one! The toy tunnel still enjoys a place in my home office.

Please convey my heartfelt condolences to Mrs. O'Neill.

Ahsan

-----  
Ahsan Kareem  
Robert M. Moran Professor of Engineering  
NatHaz Modeling Laboratory  
University of Notre Dame  
Notre Dame, IN 46556-0767  
ph: 574-631-6648  
fax: 574-631-9236  
kareem@nd.edu  
www.nd.edu/~nathaz  
www.windycity.ce.nd.edu

---

From - Tue Aug 5 12:15:18 2003  
Received: from imo-d06.mx.aol.com (imo-d06.mx.aol.com [205.188.157.38])

DR. O'NEILL GAVE ME MY FIRST INSITE TO COMPUTERS AND PIERS. HE WAS ALWAYS HELPFUL AND FULL OF THE SPIRIT OF TEACHING. HE WILL BE MISSED IN THIS LIFE.

RUSSELL W. LEAVENS, PE

From - Tue Aug 5 12:12:29 2003  
Received: from smtp2.mail.iamworld.net (smtp2-out.mail.iamworld.net [204.91.241.117])

Over the years, this good man was an inspiration to me and very many others in the drilled shaft industry. I feel honored to have worked with him on several research projects.

I know that your loss is great and my family and I will keep you all in our prayers.

Jim Lewis

From - Tue Aug 5 12:11:30 2003

Received: from goinpostal.extremezone.com (enterprise.extremezone.com [208.129.255.5])

I would like to express my sympathy to the family, friends and associates of Dr. O'Neill. Dr. O'Neill's life and scholarly work has benefited us all in some way. His publications and insight regarding deep foundations and many other topics have been most helpful. The family of Dr. O'Neill can take comfort in the fact that he positively influenced many people in the geotechnical community.

Thank you,  
Brian Lingnau, PhD, PE  
Speedie and Associates  
3331 East Wood Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85040  
(602) 997-6391 Tel.  
(602) 943-5508 Fax.  
blingnau@speedie.net

---

From: JACK VINCENT MATSON [mailto:jvm4@psu.edu]  
Sent: Monday, August 04, 2003 3:26 PM

Mike's death is truly sad; he was outstanding in every way.

Jack

From - Tue Aug 5 12:14:17 2003  
Received: from ellis-ex01.elliscorp.com (adsl-068-153-224-194.sip.jax.bellsouth.net [68.153.224.194])

Dear Colleague,

It is with profound sadness that I am reading an obituary for Dr. O'Neill this morning. It was just one week ago when I was asked the question "Who I considered to be my mentor?" during a personal interview. My reply was Mike O'Neill. After reflecting on the question later that day, I wondered whether people realize the impact they have on others years after they no longer have daily contact.

I was an engineering student at UH pursuing a Master of Science degree in 1976-1977 during which time Dr. O'Neill was on the faculty. Even though he was not my faculty advisor, I spent the most time with him as I deeply admired his great knowledge and vast understanding in his chosen field of foundation engineering. His ability to present engineering principles clearly and with persuasion during his classes and lectures are a testament to his greatness as an engineer and an instructor. Since graduation, I was fortunate to see Mike again at different engineering meetings around the country. As I have read over the years of the accomplishments of Mike and the prestigious awards and recognition he has received from the engineering community, I was so proud of him and also eager to tell everyone that Mike was my teacher.

Since gaining my Master of Science degree in 1977, I also achieved an MBA degree from UH but remained a practicing engineer. I believe it was Mike's mentoring that encouraged me to pursue my professional path and also establish a strong work ethic. Mike was the hardest and most diligent engineer I have known - to this day. I have gone on to receive local engineering awards and remain active with the Florida Engineering Society and my local chapter in Jacksonville. Mike's work ethic always inspired me to contribute back to the engineering profession and I will continue to do so.

Knowing Mike since 1976, I'm sure he realized that his character would influence many young persons in their developing careers and lives.  
Thanks.=20

With deepest regret,

Michael Lithman, PE

Vice President/CFO  
Principal Engineer  
Ellis & Associates, Inc.  
7064 Davis Creek Road  
Jacksonville, Florida 32256  
Phone: 904-880-0960  
Fax: 904-880-0970  
m.lithman@ellisassoc.com

From - Tue Aug 5 12:11:12 2003

Received: from plover.csun.edu (plover.csun.edu [130.166.1.24])

It saddens me to learn about Mike's sudden passing away. He was acting Chair of Civil Engineering Department in 1984 when I came to UH as a Visiting Professor. He interacted with me closely in my first year teaching at UH. He struck me as a level-headed scholar who did not particularly enjoy administrative work but felt it was his duty to serve. Serve he did again in 1989 as chair of Civil and Environmental Engineering Department. He did such a wonderful job and laid such a strong foundation for the Department, that I had an easy time to succeed him to serve as Department Chair in 1993. In my 14 years at UH, Mike and I enjoyed countless lunches together at the University Cafeteria. If he joined me late, he always asked "May I join you?" "Of course, please," I always replied. He was such a gentleman! To the academic and engineering world, he will be remembered as a world class authority who has made a lasting impact on the art and practice of deep foundation engineering. To me I will always remember Mike as an accomplished scholar and engineer, a devoted educator and administrator and above all a gentleman.

S. T. Mau  
Dean  
Engineering and Computer Science  
California State University, Northridge

---

From - Tue Aug 5 11:52:07 2003

Received: from Post-Office.UH.EDU (NS3.UH.EDU [129.7.1.20])

A leading authority in geotechnical engineering. I respect him so =  
highly.=20

Y.L. Mo

From - Tue Aug 5 12:12:34 2003

Received: from ms-smtp-01.texas.rr.com (ms-smtp-01.texas.rr.com [24.93.36.229])

To the family of Dr. O'Neill,

After knowing him as a teacher and later as a friend, for almost 30-years, when I think of him I still would call him Dr. O'Neill. I am saddened to learn of Mike O'Neill's passing. I pray that his family will find peace and understanding in the kind and thoughtful words that will be said about Dr. Mike O'Neill. I met him when he first came to teach at the U/H in the mid-70's. As a graduate student in Civil Engineering with a specialty in soils as it was called then, I quickly attached myself to Mike. I took all of his courses that I could. In the late 70's, I graduated and went to work for Southwestern Labs where he had once worked, I think significantly because he had worked there. That created a special bond for me...I was working where Dr. O'Neill had worked. He became my engineering mentor from then forward. He would peer review my more involved projects. His verbal summary was always the same, "I think you did a very good job and covered all the points". There would be numerous comments and corrections to be sure...but he was always so encouraging and supportive. I would call him and ask him a technical question. If he was busy he would say so in no uncertain terms, but he would always call me later when he had time. After hearing the question, he would say, "well, I am not the expert on that subject" and he would proceed to tell me virtually everything known about it.

Mike encouraged me to push myself professionally and technically. Mike was a great role model. He encouraged and supported me when I was appointed to the ASCE National Deep Foundation Committee. He supported me when I became the Chairman of the Committee. It was a huge assignment for me at the time and I was quite apprehensive, but he said he knew I could do it. I worked very hard to live up to his encouraging words.

Aside from his vast expertise in soils and foundations, Mike was an expert in teaching, Mike was an expert in motivating, Mike was an expert in developing curiosity, Mike was an expert in encouragement, Mike was an expert in mentoring...Mike was an expert at being a great person. I will miss him dearly. I saw him at the recent Spring ASCE Texas Section meeting and we agreed to have lunch soon. That lunch will never happen. Unfortunately, I don't think I ever told him what an impact he had on my career...Mike will never be forgotten. His family and friends must know that while Mike was among us, he touched so many lives in such a positive way. The profession has lost a great mind, we have lost a great friend, Heaven has gained a great soul.

To Dr. O'Neill's family...thank you for sharing him with us. May God bless you and allow you to find peace during this most difficult time.

Ray Meyer, P.E.

U/H Civil Engineering Class of '73 and '78

Received: from HQEXCHANGE.dot.state.co.us (dhqhp2.dot.state.co.us [63.225.17.34])

I have the privilege of working with Prof. O'Neill on a study to improve the geotechnical axial methodology for Colorado Drilled shafts. He provided me with a magnificent and comprehensive review of our new report.

He was the most "humble," "knowledgable" and "polite" man I have ever known. His last e-mail to me dated (attached below) July 25 say it all.

What a great educator Mike was. We will all miss him.

Naser Abu-Hejleh, PH.D, PE  
Colorado DOT

Naser,

I will be glad to look over the revised executive summary. I would assume that those who would read only that summary would not be interested in too much technical detail. Being a technical person myself, I have great trouble writing things like that. So, you are not along.

I hope I was not too picky on my comments. I made detailed comments only because I think your report will be a real milestone in drilled shaft design in soft rock, not only in Colorado, but nationwide and maybe even worldwide.

Mike

Michael W. O'Neill, PhD, PE  
Cullen Distinguished Professor of Civil Engineering  
N-122 Engineering Building 1  
University of Houston  
Houston, Texas 77204-4003 USA

Phone: +1-713-743-4252  
Fax: +1-713-743-4260  
e-mail: oneill@uh.edu  
Web Site: [www.egr.uh/CIVE/oneill/oneill.html](http://www.egr.uh/CIVE/oneill/oneill.html)

---

From - Tue Aug 5 12:12:56 2003  
Received: from servernt7.dappolonia.it ([194.185.79.98])

All of us here at D'Appolonia were very sad to hear of the passing of =  
Dr. O'Neill. While we never actually met, he had a great impact on our =  
professional lives, and was a daily reference in the offshore =  
engineering field. We extend our most sincere condolences.

Eric Parker  
D'Appolonia S.p.A.  
Via San Nazaro 19  
16145 Genova  
Italy  
phone +39 010 36 28 148  
fax +39 010 36 21 078  
cell +39 335 69 29 794

From - Tue Aug 5 12:13:01 2003  
Received: from sand4.gxn.net (sand4.gxn.net [195.147.249.239])

Mike O'Neill was a friend of mine.

Although we only met once, in Washington back in 1994, we have kept in touch by 'phone and e-mail over the years. He was planning to visit the UK in the near future and was to visit my wife, Abigail and I in Bury St Edmunds.

We talked on Friday to discuss the fact that I had missed the TRB deadline but I would send him something during August for Geo-Strata. We discussed trip details for his visit and I was looking forward to seeing him again and showing him something of where I live.

Mike was one of the good guys and his death has hit me harder than I thought it would. I will miss him and his easy humour.

Please extend my most sincere condolences to his family.

Regards

John Whitworth  
Whitworth Peck Consulting  
5 Eastern Way  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk  
IP32 7AB  
England  
Tel: + 44 1284 749837  
Fax: + 44 1284 749839

---

From - Tue Aug 5 12:12:48 2003  
Received: from relay1.softcomca.com (relay1.softcomca.com [168.144.1.67])

Please accept my deepest sympathy on the passing of a person who was both a gentleman and a scholar, and contributed enormously to our understanding of deep foundation behavior.

I shared many technical interests with Mike and very much appreciated his always-willing and constructive help and comments. We were particularly pleased to have Mike visit us in Sydney and deliver a short course 2 years ago. As always, it was a model of clarity and common sense.

The geotechnical profession world-wide will mourn his passing.

Prof. Harry Poulos  
Senior Principal, Coffey Geosciences, Australia.

From - Tue Aug 5 12:14:42 2003  
Received: from geodesign.net (geodesign.net [161.58.124.242])

We are saddened to learn of Dr. O'Neill's untimely passing and express our sympathy to his family. The geotechnical community has learned from and relied upon Dr. O'Neill's geotechnical publications, research and design guidance over the years and will continue to do so. As a fellow geotechnical engineer I am thankful for his many contributions to advance the state of the art.

Theodore von Rosenvinge, IV, P.E.  
President  
GeoDesign, Inc.  
984 Southford Road  
Middlebury, CT 06762  
Tel (203) 758-8836 Ext. 104  
Fax (203) 758-8842

---

From: Arup K. SenGupta [mailto:aks0@Lehigh.EDU]  
Sent: Monday, August 04, 2003 3:55 PM

Needless to say that I am indeed sorry to learn the untimely passing of Prof. O'Neill. Although I did not deal with him personally while I was there as a student, I have vivid memories about him and knew some of his graduate advisees. I offer my sincere condolences to the members of his family during this period of bereavement. It is also an insurmountable loss to UH's CEE department. Prof. O'Neill's thoughts will be in my prayer. Thanks for bringing this news to my attention.  
Best Wishes,  
Arup

---

From - Tue Aug 5 12:15:06 2003  
Received: from bechtel.Colorado.EDU (bechtel.Colorado.EDU [128.138.228.11])

I was deeply saddened to learn about Mike O'Neill's passing. Mike was among the leading foundation engineering experts in the US, and his work in the area of deep foundations is seminal and remains his lasting legacy. He was a scholar and gentleman, and a very good friend. He was always helpful and accessible. I served together with Mike on several ASCE technical committees, and we also worked together on a wide range of matters related to civil engineering education. Mike cared deeply about his profession, and he always gave his full attention to the tasks before him. He was a very dedicated and hard-working engineer and scholar. Mike will be deeply missed.

Stein Sture

Professor Stein Sture  
Associate Dean, College of Engineering and Applied Science  
University of Colorado  
Boulder, Colorado 80309-0422  
(Phone: 303-492-7651)

From - Tue Aug 5 12:14:29 2003

Received: from mail12.se.skanska.net (mail12.se.skanska.net [144.57.128.135])

I had the distinct honor to speak to Professor O'Neill a number of times by telephone and meet him at the Martin Kapp Lecture. My firm engaged Professor O'Neill to help us with a problem we were having on a major construction project. Professor O'Neill was the ultimate professional. His statements and reports were clear, concise, informative and fair to everyone involved. Having taught courses at both the undergraduate and graduate level myself, I understand how fortunate the students at the University of Houston were in having a teacher with that rare combination of both a strong theoretical background and the knowledge of the realities of working "in the trenches". Our condolences to his family, colleagues and students.

Vince Tirolo  
Chief Engineer  
Slattery Skanska Inc.

---

From - Tue Aug 5 12:14:01 2003

Received: from stork.mail.pas.earthlink.net (stork.mail.pas.earthlink.net

Hi, I have been a member of ADSC for many years and recall the numerous encounters with Dr. O'Neill. He was always very polite and gave encouragement when I first started speaking at seminars he also gave presentations. He seemed to have a boundless energy that was an example for the young engineer to rise in his or her profession. I knew that Dr. O'Neill was very busy but he would take time to talk to me, even when setting up for a presentation.

When I decided to go back to night school and pursue a doctorate in engineering, Dr. O'Neill volunteered to be on my dissertation committee without me asking or even knowing he would be eligible. I will never forget his offer and it will be my loss that he will not be there to see me through that professional path. I will, however, always remember the giant he was in our profession and will hope to work hard to be the engineer he would have been proud of.

I also remember my latest article on pilings that was published in foundation drilling magazine. Knowing that it might prove to be controversial, I first ran it by Dr. O'Neill to make sure it was accurate. When he said it was good, I then knew I could defend it because it was approved by the "Best".

Eternally grateful, a friend and fan,

W. Tom Witherspoon

From - Tue Aug 5 15:01:07 2003

Received: from nxdamail.netxwireless.com (h24-207-7-3.dlt.dccnet.com

Our deepest sympathy to the Mike O'Neill Family from Horst and Hildegard Aschenbroich and the staff of Con-Tech Systems, Vancouver Canada.

The enclosed picture reminds me of our daily trips to and from the ADSC Faculty Workshop at Pingrin Park near Fort Collins Colorado. Mike and I had to commute by car every day from Fort Collins to the Workshop. During these one hour trips I learned a lot from Mike about Drilled Shafts and Mikes devotion to our Industry, .

Horst Aschenbroich

President of Con-Tech Systems LTD.

Horst K. Aschenbroich  
Con-Tech Systems Ltd.  
8150 River Road  
Delta, BC V4G 1B5  
Tel: 604 946-5571  
Cell: 604 250-8161  
email: <mailto:horst@contechsystems.com>  
web: <http://www.contechsystems.com>



It was truly a shock to hear that Mike passed away. It is a loss to his family; and also the entire geotechnical community worldwide. I am truly sorry.

I met Mike sometime in 1979 after I joined the University of Texas at El Paso as a faculty member. We became good friends over the years. I respected him for his professionalism. Many in my profession will tell the same story. However, I would like to share one thing with his family which Mike never knew. Two of my books – “Principals of Geotechnical Engineering” and “Principals of Foundation Engineering” with its translation in Spanish, Korean, Chinese and Persian have probably the largest market in the world among the books of its kind. They both have gone to the 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Because of my total and absolute confidence in Mike’s honesty, integrity, professionalism, compassion to help others, and humane approach to any and all things in life, I have told my wife, Janice, several times during the last ten years, that just in case I pass away early, contact Mike for the future revisions of the book, which should be published as authors, “Das and O’Neill” and share the royalties with Mike. That will be good enough for most of your retirement needs. Mike will take care of it. I know he would have. In fact, I shared the same story with my secretary, Denise, last week. When I shared the news of Mike’s passing away with my wife she was sad and said “so we are back to square one. Aren’t we”? That is how highly my wife and I thought of Mike.

Mike was a good man, a decent man who taught many people many things and probably became a better man and a better engineer in that process.

I hate to say goodbye, but my friend Michael so long! Rest in peace.

Braja M. Das  
California State University, Sacramento  
College of Engineering and Computer Science

---

From - Tue Aug 5 15:30:30 2003  
Received: from raptor.fugro.com ([63.120.36.136])

It is with great sadness to hear of the passing of this outstanding person and leader in our profession. Mike was a colleague at Southwestern Laboratories in the early 70's and he immediately established himself as a geotechnical engineer of prominence destined for a bright future. His future years in the profession of geotechnical engineering were outstanding, and he always brought a high level of intelligence, thoroughness, determination, integrity and professionalism to every project he was part of. This is a great loss to his family and friends and to the community of geotechnical engineering in Texas where he was so highly regarded and respected.

May God Bless and Keep His Family,  
Bob

Robert S. Patton, P.E.  
FUGRO SOUTH, INC.  
2880 Virgo Lane  
Dallas TX 75229  
972.484.8301 Office  
972.620.7328 Fax  
rpatton@fugro.com  
www.fugro.com

From - Tue Aug 5 15:14:43 2003

Received: from chortos.wingnet.net (chortos.wingnet.net [206.30.57.3])

I am profoundly shocked and saddened by Mike's death.

I was for many years a principal in Vulcan Iron Works Inc., the manufacturer of pile driving equipment. I am now editor of Pile Buck. During these years I worked with Mike on the DFI Vibratory committee, including his session on vibratory hammers at the TRB in 1990. He was, in my opinion, the greatest deep foundations expert in the U.S. at the time of his death. For my account he always took time to help me set up my own soil mechanics and foundations courses here at UTC and also be a reference for an additional PE license. I found him to be as down to earth and accessible as he was knowledgeable.

Such events remind us of the following: "In fulfillment of the charge which God had entrusted to me, I laid the foundation like a skillful master-builder; but another man is now building upon it. Let every one take care how he builds; For no man can lay any other foundation than the one already laid-Jesus Christ." (1 Cor 3:10-11)

May God richly bless you all at this time of loss.

Don C. Warrington

Visit my sites:

<http://www.vulcanhammer.org>

<http://www.vulcanhammer.net>

---

From - Tue Aug 5 15:30:14 2003  
Received: from ATSERHOU-EMAIL1.localhost.atser (12.208.216.216.transedge.com  
[216.216.208.12])

Dear Professor:

A friend, a philosopher and an excellent guide!!!

I met with Prof. O'Neill in 1994 for the first time in Orlando, FL in a FHWA Deep Foundation Conference. He was very receptive and spent a few minutes with me before I had a chance to take a photop with him. I was very happy to have interacted with him, a brilliant researcher. I was working then on the FHWA Load Test Data Base in Turner-Fairbanks Highway Research Center in McLean, Virginia. He has been a source of inspiration for me since then. I met him a few times in TRB, and last time in his office in Spring, 2003. I have held numerous telephone conversations with him inspire his busy schedule and intense research undertakings. During those periods, he has encouraged me to compile the local load test data in the Beaumont Formation and the Lissie Formation in the Texas Gulf Coast, and improve the design capacity by optimizing the alpha factor for local formations. He has essentially provide me with the guidance and encourage me to publish the data for local practitioners. Though I was not his student, he has never hesitate to disseminate his expertise and knowledge on deep foundations, and especially, very recent observations on local load tests on drilled shafts conducted in 2001.

I successfully completed defense of my dissertation last semester. But for his help and encouragement, my dissertation may not have been possible. I value him:

first, a friend;  
second, a philosopher; to think well in to the future by disseminating the knowledge among his friends, colleagues and students  
lastly, a guide to me; and many more shaping our lives and enriching future of our profession.

In a nutshell, you have touched my life by being there always when I needed you the most.

May your soul rest in peace.

I do offer my heartfelt condolence to the bereaved families, both personal and the academic.

Raghu N. Dass, P. E.  
Project Engineer  
Geotechnical and Environmental Department  
ATSER LP  
1150 Richcrest Drive  
Houston, Texas 77060  
Phone: (281) 925 8242  
Facsimile: (281) 925 8295  
Email: raghunath.dass@atser.com  
www.atser.com

From - Tue Aug 5 16:55:10 2003

Received: from cltex01.rwhitehead.com (198-143-239-78.ded.btitelecom.net)

It was May 20, 1996 when I first met Dr. O'Neill in a drilled shaft workshop held in Richmond, Virginia. Owing to his enthusiastic three-day lecture, I became one of the experts in drilled shaft design in my company. Four years later, I made a phone call to ask him a question with a little fear that he might not remember me or might be too busy to answer to my question. The way he responded was so kind and much more than I expected. Two years later after the workshop, I moved to Richmond from Blacksburg and my office happened to be located at a walking distance from the hotel where he had lectured. Each time I pass the hotel, he will be dearly missed and also will remind me of his high standard as a professional engineer.

John S. Kim, Ph.D, PE  
Project Manager / Senior Engineer  
Ralph Whitehead Associates, Inc.  
10800 Midlothian Turnpike Suite 302  
Richmond, VA 23235  
(804) 794-1185 (Phone)  
(804) 378-0923 (Fax)  
john.kim@rwhitehead.com

---

### Tribute to Mike O'Neill

Mike O'Neill was the "Gold Standard" for professors.

In short, he was simply outstanding, off the charts, really, as a teacher, researcher, and administrator.

He had won so many well-deserved awards that most of us had stopped counting.

Mike had been given much, but he never stopped giving back to his students and his colleagues. Up until the moment he died, he continued to develop what God had given him, and we are all richer for it.

His value to the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department, The College of Engineering, and to the University of Houston is beyond any normal measure. He will be sorely missed.

Dennis Clifford  
Professor  
Civil and Environmental Engineering  
University of Houston

From - Tue Aug 5 16:55:25 2003  
Received: from gwia.dot.state.tx.us ([144.45.209.132])

I never took any classes from Dr. O'Neill when I was attending the University of Houston. But in the last few years, I had the privilege to work with him on a research project and organizing a conference. He was very kind and generous with his time. He shared a lot of his knowledge with me. I am honored to have the opportunity to work with him and learn so much from him in just a few years. He will be missed.

Stanley Yin, P.E.  
District Materials Engineer  
Houston District Laboratory  
Texas Department of Transportation  
Tel : 713- 802-5211  
Fax : 713-802-5210

---

From - Thu Aug 7 13:58:34 2003  
Received: from smtp.hayneswhaley.com (207-193-173-13.hayneswhaley.com)

I rush everyday morning to listen to the Engines of Our Ingenuity while driving to work anxious to learn more.

Except on August 6, when what I heard shocked and hypnotized me for couples of minutes.

when I came back to my senses, I thought:

Being with God, Professor O'Neill is not among us anymore.

However, his distinguished character, skills, and achievements will keep him alive in the hearts of his family, Colleagues, and students.

Our deep condolences and sympathy in times like that.

A. A. Melhem  
Former Student.

---

From - Thu Aug 7 13:59:19 2003  
Received: from poseidon.ce.gatech.edu (poseidon.ce.gatech.edu [128.61.130.65])

>Date: Wed, 6 Aug 2003 01:27:27 -0700 (PDT)

>From: ethem geo <ethemgeo@yahoo.com>

>Subject: condolence

>

>

>Mr. Mayne

>I would like to present my sorrow, condolence, for

>sudden passing of Prof. O'Neill, to his family and

>friends from Istanbul, Turkey, as a young geotechnical

>engineer. no word is sufficient after Prof. O'Neill,

>patinetly

>

>Ethem Balik, MSc., Civ. Eng

From - Thu Aug 7 13:56:05 2003

Received: from smtp805.mail.sc5.yahoo.com (smtp805.mail.sc5.yahoo.com

There are no words to describe the pain that I feel as I am trying to realize that I will not see Dr O'Neill again. Dr O'Neill's death is not only a shock for me. It is a great loss. He was more than my advisor; more than the man who taught me soil mechanics and foundation engineering; he was a father to me. He was not only a leading expert in his field but a noble leader. I admired him and loved him for his courage, honesty, modesty, integrity. He was an exceptional character making you feel proud to be human. He leaves an irreplaceable gap behind. I still can't believe I won't see him again walking in the corridors of the University. I still can't believe I will not get an e-mail from him guiding me. I still can't believe I will not have a meeting with him again to talk about the progress of my research and listen to his priceless advice. I can't believe he is gone. I thank God for giving me the opportunity to meet such a wonderful, active, live person, such a great man. I don't know how I can finish a project that we started together and we walked step by step together. But I know I have to try hard, to stand in my feet and do what he would do, what he taught me to do. To be strong and devoted and focused no matter how difficult it is. To try to finish alone what we started together, to go on without him. God knows how difficult this is for me. But Dr O'Neill, I will try to do what you would like me to do. I will try to go on without you and finish what we started together in your memory. God be with you wherever you are. Goodbye Dr O'Neill. You will always be in my heart.

Anna Sellountou

---

From - Thu Aug 7 14:00:45 2003

Received: from mailrelay.asce.org (mailrelay.asce.org [198.242.37.56])

"A teacher affects eternity;

he can never tell where his influence stops."

Henry Brooks Adams

The Education of Henry Adams [1907]

Dr. O'Neill was a great teacher, an icon in his field, and a fine man. I had the pleasure of being a student of his, of seeing him give his Terzaghi lecture, and speaking to him as a colleague. He was pure class and had my complete respect.

My prayers go out to his family in their time of loss.

Patricia Brown  
MCE 1994

From - Thu Aug 7 13:56:31 2003  
Received: from mail.ch2m.com (smtp1.ch2m.com [198.91.8.16])

I was greatly saddened to learn of Dr. O'Neill's death. I met Mike in person only in 2001, although I had been aware of his excellent research efforts since my university days in the 1980's. At the suggestion of my colleague Don Anderson in Seattle, we consulted with Mike regarding a new wharf project we were helping design for the Port of Houston. Mike's involvement and advice were instrumental in helping us develop a full-scale drilled shaft load test program for the proposed wharf, a program which ultimately will save several million dollars in construction costs. Mike also reviewed our construction drawings and specifications and provided detailed comments and suggestions for improvements that will greatly enhance the quality of the finished product.

To be honest, when Don first suggested we consult with Mike on our project, I was somewhat in awe at the prospect of calling up one of the most distinguished figures in the engineering world for help. Of what interest could our "routine" project possibly be to one of such weighty accomplishments? To my relief (and astonishment), Mike not only agreed to help, but his extensive knowledge and expertise were coupled with a very low key and unassuming demeanor. It was a great pleasure to work with him, and I must say I had looked forward to inviting Mike into the field to see our completed project once it was finished. Mike's contribution to our project is valued at many times the modest fee we paid for his services. From the other accolades I have since read of him and heard today at his funeral, I believe our experience is the norm rather than the exception.

Mike was a great man, and I consider it an honor to have known and worked with him. My heartfelt condolences to his family and friends their loss.

---

Ron Byres P.E.  
Project Manager  
CH2M Hill  
7600 West Tidwell Road  
Houston, TX, 77040-5719  
tel (713) 462-0169 ext. 299  
efax (972) 385-5158

---

From - Thu Aug 7 14:00:29 2003  
Received: from server.cobfen.com (cobfen.com [64.219.82.153])

I was working on a project in graduate school at UH and approached Michael O'Neill with a question. I had used a geotechnical software program to evaluate a soil/structure interaction and wanted Mike's opinion on the results. Mike's first comment regarding my results follows. "You are using a bull dozer to excavate for a flower bed." I guess that was his way of indicating that I was using the wrong tool for the task at hand, but he did follow up with some very helpful advice.

John "Odis" Cobb  
Cobb, Fendley & Associates, Inc.  
713-462-3242

---

From - Thu Aug 7 13:56:25 2003  
Received: from Post-Office.UH.EDU (NS3.UH.EDU [129.7.1.20])

To Dr. Michael O'Neill's family

This note is to express my sympathy. I was fortunate enough to be on a few university committees with Mike, and was very impressed with his ability to judge situations and people in a fair and empathetic way.  
Best wishes to you.

Laura J. Frishman, PhD  
Moores Professor, Chair of Basic Science  
College of Optometry, Univ. of Houston  
505 J. Davis Armistead  
Houston, TX 77204-2020

Email: lfrishman@uh.edu  
Phone: 1 713 743 1972  
Fax: 1 713 743 2595

---

From: Krystal Holifield [mailto:KrystalHolifield@TOREngineering.com]  
Sent: Tuesday, August 05, 2003 12:18 PM  
To: Lupe M Pesina  
Subject: Dr. O'neil

Lupe,

I wish I were writing under better circumstances, but I wanted to send my condolences to the department for Dr. O'neil's passing. He was an amazing professor, educator and engineer, and he will be greatly missed. I had the opportunity to have him for a professor, and I was constantly in awe of his knowledge, expertise and gentle patience when teaching.

If you have the information on the arrangements please send them to me, I would greatly appreciate it. I know of several alumni who are interested in paying their respects, myself included.

Send everyone my best.

Take care,  
Krystal Holifield (aka: Krystal Kelly)

P.S. My work e-mail is messed up sometimes so if you could send any e-mail correspondence to my home e-mail I would appreciate it. My home e-mail is: krystal@pangeatech.com

---

From - Thu Aug 7 13:59:37 2003  
Received: from Post-Office.UH.EDU (NS3.UH.EDU [129.7.1.20])

Mike O'Neill is not only a great personality in Geotechnical Engineering, he is also a noble and compassionate human being. I was very fortunate to be his colleague for 23 years.

---Tom Hsu

\*\*\*\*\*  
Thomas T. C. Hsu  
Moore's Professor  
Dept. of Civil & Envir. Engineering  
University of Houston  
Houston, TX 77204  
Tel: 713-743-4268  
Fax: 713-743-0421  
e-mail: thsu@uh.edu  
\*\*\*\*\*

---

From - Thu Aug 7 13:59:19 2003  
Received: from poseidon.ce.gatech.edu (poseidon.ce.gatech.edu [128.61.130.65])

>  
>  
>Mr. Mayne  
>I would like to present my sorrow, condolence, for  
>sudden passing of Prof. O'Neill, to his family and  
>friends from Istanbul, Turkey, as a young geotechnical  
>engineer. no word is sufficient after Prof. O'Neill,  
>patinetly  
>  
>Ethem Balik, MSc., Civ. Eng

---

From - Thu Aug 7 13:59:45 2003

Received: from mta02-srv.alltel.net (mta02.alltel.net [166.102.165.144])

I am a Chinese student graduated from Electrical Engineering Department last summer. Professor O'Neill is one of my master thesis committee members. I made a laser measurement device for one of his projects. We also went to field test in Dallas together for one week last October. Because of different academic background, I am not very familiar with his research area. But there are small things that make him very respectable.

During my study in University of Houston, I exchanged many emails with many professors. Maybe because professors are always very busy, most of them were very short. But professor O'Neill's email were always very detailed and courteous. Before our departure to Dallas, he wrote me a very detailed schedule about the field test even though I was only to operate my laser device. He made me feel that I am working with him instead of working for him. On field test site, he stood close to the borehole all day in the chilly rain of later October with his students who are only half of his age. From time to time he picked up a rock to find out what it is and told his student to keep a detailed record. He is really devoted to his work and his students.

I feel very sorry for losing such a good advisor. Rest in peace professor O'Neill.

Renyue Liang

---

From - Thu Aug 7 13:59:25 2003

Received: from Post-Office.UH.EDU (NS3.UH.EDU [129.7.1.20])

I just want to say that I'm going to miss Dr. O'Neill a lot. I'm so used to making his decaf coffee all the time and when the coffee pot was empty, he let me know right away for example he held his empty styrofoam cup with his mouth letting me know it's time for me to make more coffee. It's small and simple things I always remember of him. Dr. O'Neill was a generous man. When my apartment burned two years ago, he helped me. When he would go on his trips, he never forgot about us girls in the front office and always brought us something back like our Katush he brought back from Egypt which I will always treasure. Dr. O'Neill was so respected by all people including myself. He's such a smart man and intelligent person. I'm always going to miss him deeply.

Lupe Pesina

---

From - Thu Aug 7 13:58:54 2003  
Received: from shell.ce.ufl.edu (shell.ce.ufl.edu [128.227.72.103])

Thursday, August 6,

2003

To the Family of Dr. Michael O'Neill:

How would one not knowing "Mike", describe him: father, husband, advisor, professor, department chairman, ASCE editor, etc. The list is truly long and distinguished as identified by his awards (Terzaghi, Rankine, etc.). Over his thirty-year career in deep foundation research, no other person has impacted the current design and construction practices of drilled shafts and piles as Mike O'Neill.

Having served with him on committees and research projects, I however, will remember him as a gentleman and friend. Over fifteen years of correspondence, discussions, debates, etc., I never heard a negative personal comment from Mike about anyone. Moreover, Mike never "touted his own horn", but was quick to praise others, including competitors, and the young (researchers), even at his own expense. Truly, the profession, and society has lost a great man, Mike O'Neill.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Michael McVay, Professor  
University of Florida

----->><<<-----  
Mike McVay  
Dept. of Civil Engineering  
University of Florida  
ph (352) 392-8697  
fax (352) 392-3394  
----->><<<-----

---

From - Thu Aug 7 14:00:24 2003  
Received: from exchangesw.martinmarietta.com ([209.142.86.74])

> -----Original Message-----  
> From: Daniel Mofor  
> Sent: Tuesday, August 05, 2003 4:54 PM  
> To: 'O'Neill@curly.cive.uh.edu'  
> Subject: Tribute  
>  
> It was the fall of 1986, my sophomore year majoring in Civil Engineering.  
> Tuition for international students had recently been increased three-fold  
> at the University of Houston. I was a foreign student on a fixed budget  
> and about to run out of money. I could not seek off-campus employment for  
> fear of violating my immigration status.  
>  
> Dr. Mike O'Neill gave me my first job as a support staff to his graduate  
> students. The job paid \$6.50/hour but was the difference between dropping  
> out of college and graduating. This job opportunity was a turning point  
> in my life and career. Working for Dr. O'Neill, I came to find out he was  
> not only the most talented professor in the department but also the most  
> hard working. I remember vividly the night he told us he had to leave  
> because it was his wife's birthday. It was about 9:00 P.M. and we had  
> just finished running a series of pile-driving tests.  
>  
> Dr. O'Neill's well chronicled academic and professional accomplishments  
> are pail in comparison to the support and mentorship he provided desperate  
> foreign students like me in our times of need. Thank you lord for Mike  
> O'Neill.  
>  
> Dan Mofor, P.E.  
> District Technical Services Manager  
> Martin Marietta Materials

---

From - Thu Aug 7 13:59:07 2003  
Received: from smtp02.mrf.mail.rcn.net (smtp02.mrf.mail.rcn.net [207.172.4.61])

Re: Dr. Mike O'Neill

I will remember Dr. Mike O'Neill as a great engineer and professor that deserved to be on a pedestal. However, if placed on one, Dr. O'Neill would immediately climb down to teach, instruct, and interact with those around him in a friendly and approachable way. I am glad that I had the chance to meet Dr. O'Neill and will miss him. May God bless and comfort his family and us, his friends and colleagues and give us the strength to carry on.

Ed O'Malley

--

Ed O'Malley  
GeoStructures, Inc.  
107 Loudoun Street, S.E.  
Leesburg, Virginia 20175 USA  
Voice: 703-771-9844  
Fax: 703-771-9847  
email: omalley@geostructures.com

From - Thu Aug 7 14:00:02 2003  
Received: from mail014.syd.optusnet.com.au (mail014.syd.optusnet.com.au [210.49.20.172])

We in Australia share your sadness at the untimely passing of Mike = O'Neill. The academics of Monash University, including myself and Dr. = Chris Haberfield, enjoyed and profited from our contacts with Mike in = regard to our shared research interests in drilled shafts. Mike visited = Monash in the early 1990's, and we were kindly hosted in Houston by Mike = on a number of occasions through the nineties, including a sabbatical = visit by Chris.

Mike never failed to give of his valuable time to provide assistance or = some encouragement to the team of young researchers at Monash. We will = always recall him as a patient, kind and unassuming gentleman. The = geotechnical world is poorer for his passing, but we are all richer in = having known him.

Dr. Julian Seidel.

---

From - Thu Aug 7 14:00:36 2003  
Received: from Post-Office.UH.EDU (NS3.UH.EDU [129.7.1.20])

I first met Dr. O'Neill when I interviewed at the University of Houston in September 1998. Almost immediately, he made an impression of fairness and genuine concern for the department's future as well as for me. I've known him for ~ 5 years during which time we used to eat lunch together approximately 3 times a week.

In addition to his company, I would enjoy our time together because he was genuinely concerned about my future and would provide substantial suggestions to improve. On several occasions he has been very generous with his time and knowledge in assisting me in my own career here at UH. I made a mental note of the fact that not only has UH benefited tremendously because of his input, but that his contributions were made without expecting anything in return.

I was very happy that he was able to travel to several locations recently especially his country of origin "Ireland". He was very upbeat about these trips and would talk fondly about his visits to Belgium, Hawaii, San Diego, etc.

I miss him already and hope his family can find the strength to continue on...

Shankar

\*\*\*\*\*

Shankar Chellam, Assistant Professor  
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and  
Department of Chemical Engineering  
4800 Calhoun Road  
University of Houston  
Houston, TX 77204-4003  
Phone: (713) 743-4265; Fax: (713) 743-4260  
email: chellam@uh.edu <mailto:chellam@uh.edu>  
web page: <http://www.egr.uh.edu/cive/faculty/chellam/>

\*\*\*\*\*

From - Thu Aug 7 13:56:16 2003

Received: from out6.mx.nwbl.wi.voyager.net (out6.mx.nwbl.wi.voyager.net [169.207.3.77])

I am so sorry to learn of the death of Dr. Michael O'Neill. He had outstanding scientific skill and a strong personality, and he was a good friend to all of geotechnical engineers.

I will miss him. Please accept my heartfelt condolences.

Sincerely,

Mark Svinkin

---

From - Thu Aug 7 13:58:45 2003

Received: from poseidon.ce.gatech.edu (poseidon.ce.gatech.edu [128.61.130.65])

Yes President/Professor Togrol,

It is a huge loss for geotechnical engineering and piling industry. I shall forward your note of sympathy to the O'Neill family.

Respectfully

Paul

At 05:01 PM 8/6/2003 +0300, you wrote:

>Dear Paul,

>I am deeply sorry for the sudden loss of Professor O'Neil. Please accept our  
>condolences on behalf of the Turkish National Committee for ISSMGE.

>Best wshes

>Ergun

>

---

From - Thu Aug 7 13:55:33 2003

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Death of Dr. Michael W. O'Neill  
Date: Thu, 07 Aug 2003 10:27:33 -0500  
From: "Tom Yarbrough" <TYARBRO@dot.state.tx.us>

Colleagues:

Some of you have already learned of the death of Dr. Michael W. O'Neill of the University of Houston. For those who were not aware, Mike passed away last Saturday of a heart attack.

A memorial fund is being established in honor of Professor O'Neill. If you wish to contribute, donations can be made to the UH/Michael O'Neill Memorial Fund, and sent to the following address:

Dept. of Civil & Environmental Engineering  
University of Houston  
4800 Calhoun  
N107 Engineering Bldg 1  
Houston, Tx. 77204-4003

Mike was an internationally acknowledged pioneer in the development of drilled shaft and augercast pile foundation design and construction techniques. He was a friend to many throughout TxDOT, and was always generous in sharing his time, knowledge and expertise with us. We are saddened by his death and will sorely miss his always friendly advice and encouragement.

Regards,  
Tom M. Yarbrough, P.E.  
Structures Research Engineer  
TxDOT - RTI  
512-465-7685 (voice)  
512-465-7486 (fax)  
tyarbro@dot.state.tx.us

---

From - Tue Aug 5 16:55:25 2003  
Received: from gwia.dot.state.tx.us ([144.45.209.132])

I never took any classes from Dr. O'Neill when I was attending the University of Houston. But in the last few years, I had the privilege to work with him on a research project and organizing a conference. He was very kind and generous with his time. He shared a lot of his knowledge with me. I am honored to have the opportunity to work with him and learn so much from him in just a few years. He will be missed.

Stanley Yin, P.E.  
District Materials Engineer  
Houston District Laboratory  
Texas Department of Transportation  
Tel : 713- 802-5211  
Fax : 713-802-5210

From - Tue Aug 26 10:36:07 2003

Received: from smtp1.linkmail.local (smtp1.link.net [213.131.64.8])

Due to a long vacation for the last three weeks, I have just knew of the sad news about Prof. O'Neill's death. I received the news with great sadness and sorrow. My condolences to his wife and family.

We indeed have lost a remarkable man, whose spirit and knowledge shall continue to inspire, direct, and assist many colleagues and thousands of students all over the globe.

I have known Prof. O'Neill as his student in 1988 when I joined the graduate program at UH. Although I have joined UH to complete my Ph.D under his supervision, it did not work out and instead he selected Prof. Vipu to be my advisor and as I remember at that time he told me " Prof. Vipu is an excellent researcher and I am confident that you will benefit from working with him even more than working with me". I respected his sincere advice and humbleness and it worked out very fine for me and Prof. Vipu and I completed my Ph.D degree in December 1993 and left to my home country Egypt. I returned to Houston in 1995 accompanying my wife while she studied for her Ph.D. in economics. It took me more than 6 months to find a decent job in Houston and when I asked for Prof. O'Neill's help and he kindly offered me a job as a research associate to work with him on several researches funded by NSF, FHWA and Baroid Drilling Mud. I had the an office opposite to his and for almost a couple of years I have seen him on daily basis. I can tell that Prof. O'Neill is a very hard working person, talented, devoted to research and science, serious and kind hearted. He enjoyed teaching, advising, assisting and benefiting others. I have seen him many times returning from field trips and even from overseas trips to his office directly from the airport and completing the work day without even complaining from jet lag. We once stayed in a freezing night in College Station until 3 am performing a pile load test and he was hand by hand supervising and collecting data and encouraging me. I will not forget how he helped me financially to support myself and family during my stay at Houston by selecting me as his research associate and also by passing extra assignments every now and then. He also invited me to the first Geo-Institute Conference in Utah and assisted me in writing, editing and submitting some research papers to journals and conferences. After my final return to Egypt we continued to get in touch through emails and regular mail until he visited Cairo as a distinguished invited speaker at Cairo University International Conference (2000). We again met and enjoyed a trip to Luxor and visited most of the monuments in Cairo and Luxor and I sure insisted that he rides the camel in the desert and he did.

A tribute to this great Professor and kind person and may his soul continue to inspire and assist us and others for many years to follow. I wish his family the best.

Dr. Alaa Ata  
Associate Professor of Civil Engineering  
Zagazig University, Egypt.  
Phone & Fax (202) 418-2941  
Mobile (010) 541-3838  
aata@link.net

From - Tue Aug 26 10:32:38 2003  
Received: from mxmpita.excite.com (nn2.excitenetwork.com [207.159.120.56])

Dear frinds,

I feel very sorry and really sad. I met Prof.O Neill 1990 at University of Houston .I spent three months as visiting prof. Then I met him again 1994 in deep foundation conf, and lastly in Cairo few years ago. I sent him an e mail during 9-11. Also I received a mail from him. We really lost him.

Dr fathi abdrabbo

---

From - Tue Aug 26 10:40:42 2003  
Received: from seesarl.corporate.gannettfleming.com (varan.gfnet.com [207.140.67.7])

I did not know Dr O'Neill all that well. I met with him and have spoken to him on several occasions and found to be amiable and helpful. From my professional associations, I have found that those who knew Dr. O'Neill thought highly of him. Dr. O'Neill is one of those few who manage to make great strides technically while going beyond the technical to take a personal interest in use of his work and in promoting others to carry it further. One could not hope to achieve more. He will be missed.

Warmest Regards,

Michael J. Byle, P.E.  
Manager - Geotechnical  
Gannett Fleming, Inc.

---

From - Tue Aug 26 10:33:09 2003  
Received: from smtp2.terraempresas.com.br (smtp2.terraempresas.com.br

I want express my deepest condolences to Prof. O'Neil's family as I join the geotechnical community in grief for the departure of one of it's most distinguished members.

Luciano Decourt

---

From - Tue Aug 26 10:40:10 2003  
Received: from hotmail.com (bay5-dav118.bay5.hotmail.com [65.54.173.148])

I would to express my deepest condolences for the passing of a great teacher and educator. Dr. O'Neil was one professor that I will never forget, I have truly enjoyed his class. His passing is a great loss to the University, industry and field.

Ghassan Hamdan

---

From - Tue Aug 26 10:32:50 2003  
Received: from mx4.ust.hk (mx4.ust.hk [143.89.13.26])

I am writing this short message with sorrow. I'm an assistance professor working on pile/drilled shaft foundations. Prof. O'Neill is a great professor I have been longing to meet. I hoped so during last year's Deep Foundation Congress in Orlando as Prof. O'Neill was the chairman of the congress. Unfortunately, he was not be able to make it due to health reasons.

Although I am not even able to get a chance to meet him, Prof. O'Neill has been in my world for a few years. We communicated many times via letters/e-mails on matters such as paper reviews and conference organization. He was always positive and constructive towards peers, even for those who he never meets. I have been benefited from Prof. O'Neill through his excellent academic works and personal comments/suggestions.

Prof. O'Neill will be in my heart fore ever.

--  
Regards

Limin Zhang  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Civil Engineering,  
Hong Kong University of Science & Technology  
Clear Water Bay, Hong Kong

Tel: 2358 8720  
Fax: 2358 1534

---

From - Tue Aug 26 10:41:01 2003  
Received: from mail.mohreng.com (ftp.mohreng.com [12.96.4.230])

Mike was the most complete scholar that I have ever been associated with. His knowledge was only surpassed by his objectivity, attention to the details, and respect for others' opinions.

I was truly honored by the research and publications we worked on together.

He will be missed!

---

Mahmod Samman, Ph.D., P.E.  
Senior Associate  
Stress Engineering Services, Inc.  
13800 Westfair East Drive  
Houston, TX 77041-1101  
office (281)955-2900  
fax (281)955-2638  
email mms@stress.com  
www.stress.com and www.cokedrum.com

---

From - Tue Aug 26 10:42:00 2003

Received: from ms-smtp-02.texas.rr.com (ms-smtp-02.texas.rr.com [24.93.36.230])

To Dr. O'Neill...to Mike,

You were one of a kind. You were brilliant, very close to be a genius, but you were also very, very kind

Help, inspiration, education, support, and trust you have provided me...almost like a father, but one with a great, great mind

Thank you for all you have given me...I just wish you lived just a bit longer so that I could give you something back

Thank you for all you have given to the geotechnical community, which if it had one wish to make now it would be for you to come back

Thank you for asking me and trusting me to teach your course for you...an honor, a prestige, a priceless gift, and a life long "brag"

I will certainly miss you...and I am certain GOD will bless you as GOD is, too, very kind

Regards,

A. Adam Saleh, Ph.D., PE  
President

SOLQUEST Engineering, Inc.  
641 Clarendon Falls Dr.  
Sugarland TX 77479

Tel.: (281) 565-0550  
e-mail: asaleh@houston.rr.com

---

From - Tue Aug 26 10:39:36 2003  
Received: from sufi.dpi.net.ir ([80.191.22.57])

Last Thursday (August 14, 2003) and with deepest sadness I learned that the international as well as the American Geotechnical community have suffered the great loss of the demise of Professor Michael W. O'Neill. When in 1976 I walked into Dr. O'Neill's office, I could not imagine that I was being introduced (by Dr. Ghazzali) to one of the most important persons in my life. Though out these many years and through our continuous contacts I came to recognize Dr. O'Neill as a distinguished applied scientist, a practical engineer, a concerned teacher and a most decent human being who effected my life in the most positive way by his work as a teacher and researcher and by his kind and attentive manners.

About two years ago we were looking for a distinguished scientist to be the keynote speaker in the third Iranian international geotechnical conference. When I mentioned his name, the response was an enthusiastic interest. This clearly showed the level of recognition of his achievements even in a land thousands of miles away from America. Unfortunately he declined due to ill health and the turmoil in this region. This way the whole Iranian geotechnical engineering community lost the opportunity to further benefit from his person. The demise of Dr. O'Neill is a very personal loss to me and my family, specially to my wife who had also met Dr. O'Neill.

With sadness I wish to express my deepest condolences to Mrs. O'Neill, his children, his colleagues, his friends and his students. He shall always be living in our hearts and minds. My prayers are with you.  
Azaroghly Yazdanbod, M.S.C.E. (class of 1979)  
Tehran, Iran