

Michael W. O'Neill Remembered ADSC's Dr. Michael W. O'Neill Lecture Award Announced

By Dr. Anna Sellountou with
S. Scot Litke, Editor-in-Chief

Background

The following article was written by one of Dr. Michael W. O'Neill's doctoral students at the University of Houston where O'Neill was a past Civil Engineering Department Chairman, and actively engaged in research and teaching. The accounting begins with reflections on his untimely passing and concludes with the announcement of the establishment of a prestigious award honoring his vast contributions to the drilled shaft, and the entire deep foundations industry. Dr. Anna Sellountou was working under Dr. O'Neill's tutelage at the time of his death. Over the past year Anna came up with the idea of creating an **International Lecture** in his name, and moreover recommending to the ADSC that the organization be the founder and sponsor of what would become a Lecture and Prize to be awarded in conjunction with the association's every three year International Deep Foundations Conference and Equipment Exposition. The ADSC had a very special, and long lasting relationship with Dr. O'Neill. The association's Industry Advancement Fund and individual member companies were sponsors of, and participants in, many of his research activities. These included work undertaken in drilled shaft foundation design, slurry construction, quality assurance,

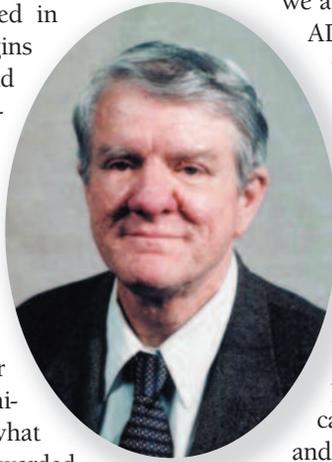
Many of his research activities were conducted for, and in conjunction with, the ADSC, State Departments of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration.

especially in the area of non-destructive testing, and comparative foundation performance. Many of his research activities were conducted for, and in conjunction with, the ADSC, State Departments of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration. Dr. O'Neill, was one of Dr. Lymon Reese's top students while at the University of Texas. He later worked closely with Dr. Reese on the development of a series of manuals funded by the Federal Highway Administration that are referred to in the industry as the "Drilled Shaft Foundation Manuals." Dr. O'Neill's influence on how drilled shaft foundations are designed, specified, constructed, and tested in the industry cannot

be overstated. As we say in popular parlance, he was the "main man"...

I had the pleasure of working with "Mike" for over 20 years on many research and ADSC educational seminars and related projects. For me it was not only a pleasure, but an honor. As in the case of Dr. Reese, Dr. O'Neill's legacy deserves not only immeasurable thanks for the contributions he made to the advancement of the drilled foundation industry, but for the humble, caring, person that he was. Mike embodied all that is the very best in the world of ge-engineering and geo-construction. The ADSC is fortunate to have similar relationships with other leading industry professionals with whom the organization continues to work on important research and applied initiatives.

Thanks to Anna's initiative and to the overwhelmingly supportive response of the ADSC's Board of Directors we are pleased to announce that in 2015, at the ADSC, DFI, G-I, PDCA's jointly sponsored International Foundations Congress and Equipment Exposition, "IFCEE 2015," the inaugural, "**Dr. Michael W. O'Neill Lecture**" will be presented to a large international audience. The Lecture will then be presented at each every three year ADSC International Foundations Conference and Equipment Exposition. In each case it will be presented by one of the profession's most accomplished researchers and practitioners. The Lecture will carry with it a cash prize to be awarded in Dr. O'Neill's name and funded by the ADSC.



According to the guidelines now in place, "*The Dr. Michael W. O'Neill Lecture Award will be presented for outstanding contributions to the advancement of the state-of-the-practice in the design and construction of deep foundations through practical, applied research and/or through recommended improvements to design and/or construction methodologies.*" Details regarding eligibility for consideration, selection criteria, and other particulars will be communicated through this magazine, official announcements in the industry media, and other appropriate means of information dissemination.

The association looks forward to being part of this inaugural event for many years to come.
S. Scot Litke, Editor-in-Chief

And now in the words of Dr. Anna Sellountou

It has been a little over ten years since that devastating Monday morning of August 4, 2003. At that time I was getting ready to meet with Dr. O'Neill and go over his comments about my Ph.D. dissertation. The phone rang and the unexpected and shocking news reached me. Dr. O'Neill had passed away. He had a heart attack over the weekend and passed away sometime around midnight on Saturday night. Shock, intense and overwhelming feelings of loss surrounded me. I could not believe it.

I rushed to the University of Houston's civil engineering department, (perhaps the first time I could remember myself in denial), in a desperate search for evidence that this was a bad joke, or a bad dream that would disappear once I saw Dr. O'Neill in his office, his door open as always, wondering why I look so worried. But seeing people's faces and sensing the buzzing atmosphere when I entered the department, I was left with a feeling of dread, and little hope.

The practical obstacles that a Ph.D. candidate can encounter by losing an advisor just prior to graduation are formidable, but losing Dr. O'Neill was by far more painful and emotionally complicated than that.

Who was Dr. O'Neill? Dr. O'Neill was internationally recognized as one of the greatest experts on deep foundations. His findings shaped government regulations and industry practice all around the world. He was an extremely knowledgeable academic and outstanding practitioner. Watching him talk and behave in his usual humble manner, one would have very little sense that this was the great world expert on deep foundations. That is because Dr. O'Neill was one of the most humble and unpretentious men one could ever meet.

His findings shaped government regulations and industry practice all around the world.

How can someone describe the greatness of this man in a few words? Extremely humble, grateful, generous, witty, forward and solid come to mind. He would never sugarcoat anything but always offered criticism in a tactful and caring way. He was a true leader admired for his honesty and integrity. He was supportive. He liked to involve people and always gave credit to his colleagues, students or whoever deserved the recognition. Anytime you emailed him with a question you would receive a detailed response almost immediately. It would take only a few minutes for a complete stranger to realize the greatness of this man, and to be struck by his exceptional personality. He was one of those legendary figures that you think "will always be there." That is why I could not believe it when I received the shocking news of his sudden death.

The years have passed and on Thursday, October 24, 2013, I received the great news from the ADSC's Board of Directors that they unanimously accepted my proposal to establish a lecture series in Dr. O'Neill's memory. It was ten years after Dr. O'Neill's death, and this time the phone rang for a good reason; notice of the establishment of the "ADSC Michael W. O'Neill Lecture and Award." ADSC would make things happen... and the ADSC Michael W. O'Neill Lecture would be inaugurated at the next International Foundations Congress and Equipment EXPO (IFCEE 2015) to be held in San Antonio, Texas, the birthplace of Dr. O'Neill. I am certain that ADSC's responsiveness, enthusiasm and support would definitely make Dr. O'Neill smile. I could not help but feel that at that moment, he could see us from somewhere and he was smiling.

The truth is that even after his unexpected death Dr. O'Neill has always been here. His presence goes on through his numerous papers, through his exceptional contributions, and through his words and acts of wisdom that will always follow and advise me during difficult times and life's challenges. I would like to deeply thank the ADSC and all of the people that worked to make this happen. This will be a wonderful noteworthy occurrence that will

preserve Dr. O'Neill's memory, reflect his values, and continue his great contribution to the deep foundation industry, and *more importantly*, one that will ensure his lasting legacy.

Dr. E. Anna Sellountou

About Dr. Michael W. O'Neill

Michael W. O'Neill was born on February 17, 1940, in San Antonio, Texas to Wayne and Hazel O'Neill and is survived by his wife Jerry and son Ron. Dr. O'Neill made exceptional contributions to the deep foundation industry. His findings still shape government regulations and industry practice across several areas. He was an extremely knowledgeable academic, but, even more so, he was an outstanding practitioner. Dr. O'Neill held Bachelor of Science, Master of Science, and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas, Austin. He had more than 40 years of experience in applied research and consulting in deep foundations, soil properties, engineering design, and full-scale field-testing of foundation systems.

Throughout his career, Dr. O'Neill was bestowed with numerous honors and awards including being named the 1998 Karl Terzaghi Lecturer for the Geo-Institute of ASCE, one of the highest honors the Geo-Institute extends. Among his many other state, national, and international awards is the ASCE Walter L. Huber Civil Engineering Research Prize, the ASCE State-of-the-Art in Civil Engineering Award, the Distinguished Service Award from the Deep Foundations Institute, the Martin S. Kapp Foundation Engineering Award of ASCE, and the ADSC Outstanding Service Award. In 2004, Dr. O'Neill was honored by the Geo-Institute in being named the geotechnical engineering profession's "Hero." Unfortunately, this honor was awarded posthumously a year after his unexpected and untimely passing. Dr. O'Neill published more than 200 technical papers and books, and supervised many masters and doctoral students. (E.A.S.).

Research Reports by Dr. O'Neill

The ADSC's Technical Library includes 250 titles including research reports, design and construction manuals, safety and other training aids, as well as others focusing on management. In addition the Library offers training videos and safety manuals in English and Spanish editions. Dr. O'Neill's work is well represented with research reports on a wide range of drilled shaft foundation related study. You will find the following:

Application of Expansive Cement in Drilled Shafts
Dr. Shamim A. Sheikh, Dr. Michael W. O'Neill

Axial Group Action in Drilled Shafts
Dr. Michael W. O'Neill

Behavior of 45° Underream Footings in Eagle Ford Shale
Dr. Michael W. O'Neill, Dr. Shamim A. Sheikh

Behavior of 45 Underreamed Footings
Dr. Shamim A. Sheikh, Dr. Michael W. O'Neill

Behavior of Axially Loaded Drilled Shafts in Beaumont Clay
Dr. Michael W. O'Neill, Dr. Lymon C. Reese

(Continued on page 41)

Behavior of Bored Piles in Beaumont Clay

Dr. Michael W. O'Neill, Dr. Lymon C. Reese

Criteria for the Design of Axially Loaded Drilled Shafts

Dr. Lymon C. Reese, Dr. Michael W. O'Neill

Design of Drilled Shafts in Expansive Clays, Dr. Michael W. O'Neill

Drilled Shafts: Construction Procedures and Design Methods

Dr. Michael W. O'Neill, Dr. Lymon C. Reese

Effect of Mineral and Polymer Slurries on Load Transfer in Drilled Shafts, Dr. Michael W. O'Neill, Edmundo Majano

Exploratory Study of Lime-Slurry Conditioning for Drilled Shafts

A. Ata, Dr. Michael W. O'Neill

Load Transfer in a Slender Drilled Pier in Sand

Dr. Michael W. O'Neill, Dr. Lymon C. Reese

Perimeter Load Transfer in Drilled Shafts in the Eagle Ford Formation, Dr. Michael W. O'Neill, Khaled M. Hassan

Resistance Factors for Drilled Shafts with Minor Defects: Progress Report for Phase I, Khaled M. Hassan, Dr. Michael W. O'Neill

Side Load Transfer in Driven and Drilled Piles,

Dr. Michael W. O'Neill

Structural Design Issues for Drilled Shafts

Dr. Michael W. O'Neill, S.W. Tabsh

Structural Resistance Factors for Drilled Shafts with Minor Anomalies Deterministic Study: Strength-State Resistance Factors, Hazem Sarhan, Dr. Michael W. O'Neill

Summary of Drilled Shaft Axial Load Tests for Bridges for Highway H-3 in the Halawa Valley, Oahu, Hawaii, Dr. Michael W. O'Neill

Use of Underreams in Drilled Shafts, Dr. Michael W. O'Neill

For information about acquiring copies of Dr. O'Neill's work and information about the Technical Library in general visit the ADSC website: www.adsc-iafd.com and select Publications, Technical Library. For a complimentary hard copy edition of the ADSC's Technical Library Catalog contact: B.D. Smith@adsc-iafd.com

About the Author

Dr. Anna Sellountou is employed by Pile Dynamics, Inc. in their Corporate Offices in Cleveland, Ohio where she specializes in Research and Development for deep foundation testing. She received her Ph.D. December 2004, her thesis was on "ACIP Piles Installed in Texas Coastal Soil: Construction Effects on the Pile Behavior and Piezocone Interpretations." She studied at the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), Athens, Greece where she obtained a Five Year Civil Engineering Degree (the equivalent to a Master degree based curriculum). Her thesis was "Clay Stability With and Without Diaphragm Wall. Application in Pefkofito Dam.



Dr. Anna Sellountou

ADSC