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Obituary

Glenn Berger (1945-2011)

The luminescence dating community, as well as the broader field of Quaternary geochronology has lost one of its' pioneering scientists, with the sudden and untimely death of Glenn Berger on September 17, 2011. Glenn will be remembered for his role in the development and application of luminescence dating techniques to understand Quaternary environments and rates of surface processes.

His many collaborators and colleagues will miss Glenn's intellectual rigor, careful attention to detail, scientific insights, and dry humor. Our deep sense of loss is compounded by the realization that his contributions to Quaternary geochronology were cut off in their prime.

Glenn became interested in the development and application of luminescence dating to Quaternary deposits in the late 1970's, following an early career interest in the development and application of $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ dating. Coming from a background in physics and geophysics, he was fortunate to acquire a thorough grounding in the physics and procedures of luminescence dating from one of the pioneers in the field - Dr David Huntley of the Department of Physics at Simon Fraser University. In 1986, Glenn went to Western Washington University to establish one of the first generation of luminescence dating laboratories in the USA. He moved to the Desert Research Institute in Reno Nevada, in 1994 to head the E.L. Cord Geochronology Laboratory, which he directed until his untimely passing.

Glenn's contributions to Quaternary geochronology were many and ranged from detailed experimental studies of the luminescence characteristics of sediments in varied environments to innovative applications to new and challenging environmental settings. Glenn constantly strived to understand which grains in a sediment would be amenable to luminescence dating. He developed meticulous sampling procedures to extract these grains and worked diligently to analyze them in the most appropriate manner. Glenn was drawn to applications of luminescence dating to challenging environments where conventional geochronological techniques proved difficult to apply or produced inconsistent results. He was particularly interested in the application of luminescence dating to water-lain sediments, especially in lacustrine and marine



environments, as illustrated by his recent work on Arctic and Antarctic marine sediments; and lacustrine sediments in the Dry Valleys of Antarctica.

Glenn Berger was always a perfectionist in his field and laboratory research and worked hard to make sure that the chronometric information he produced was as accurate and precise as could possibly be achieved. He will be missed by all who had the privilege to work with him.

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