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Memorial of David Knowlton Webb, Jr. October 19, 1928–September 2, 1973

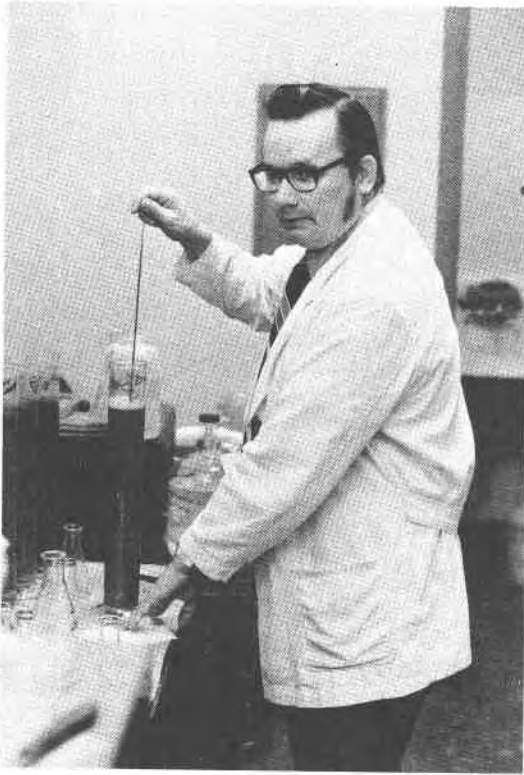
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The life and career of David Knowlton Webb was unexpectedly cut short by a heart attack on September 2, 1973, just 36 days short of his 45th birthday. Dave was deeply respected and liked by all who knew him and loved by those who knew him well.

David Webb was born in Chillicothe, Ohio, October 19, 1928, to Naomi Limle Webb and David K.

Webb, Sr. Chillicothe is a city steeped in Ohio history. His parents were keen on Ohio folklore, and it was only natural that he would develop a deep and abiding interest in the history of Ohio. Dave developed a love for books and publishing during his youth by working in his father's printshop and used book store, which occupied the front of their home. The family legend is that



Dave could set his name in type before he could write it. During his youth Dave spent his summers working on his grandfather's farm in Union County near West Mansfield, Ohio. It was apparently during this period of his life that he became interested in soil.

He attended public school in Chillicothe, graduating from high school in 1947. The following year he enlisted in the United States Army and was assigned to the Corps of Engineers. While in the Engineers he received training in soil mechanics, leadership, surveying, and military construction. He was a skilled surveyor and was assigned as a party chief in the laying out and construction of airfields and other military installations in France. Dave enjoyed his tour of duty in the Army and served for a total of five years, from August 1948 until April 1953.

Following his discharge from the army in 1953, Dave attended Texas Western College for about a year, intending to become an engineer. However, he returned home in 1954 to work as a surveyor and draftsman for a local engineering firm while he attended the Chillicothe Branch of Ohio

University. His interest in soils, soil mechanics, rocks, and the out-of-doors nudged him into geology, which was to become his life work. He soon transferred to the Ohio University main campus, where he served as a teaching assistant in geology. In the summer of 1957 Dave worked for the Ohio Division of Geological Survey under the supervision of Dr. Myron T. Sturgeon as a field assistant in a study of the geology of Athens County. This was his first contact with the organization he was to serve for the major portion of his professional career.

One of Dave's outstanding traits became obvious during his attendance at Ohio University. That was the very scholarly and methodical thoroughness with which he approached any task. This thoroughness was to win him the Phi Beta Kappa key while he was at Ohio University. After receiving his B.S. degree in geology in 1957, he went to the University of Illinois with a graduate teaching assistantship and received an M.S. in 1959 and a Ph.D. in 1961. During his tenure at Illinois, where he held an NSF fellowship, he quickly earned the respect of both faculty and students. While at Illinois Dave studied clay mineralogy under Dr. Ralph E. Grim, completing his dissertation, "Vertical variations in the clay mineralogy of sandstone, shale, and underclay members of Pennsylvanian cyclothems," in 1961.

Dave joined the Ohio Division of Geological Survey in 1961 as a clay mineralogist. The Survey at that time had no sophisticated tools with which to study clays and had not been active in clay or ceramic research for many years. Dave immediately set to work developing a long-range program which involved as a first step the acquisition of equipment needed for the investigation of clays. Although by the time the research facilities were completed Dave had little time to devote to clay studies, he did see his original goal become a reality. Because of his ability to organize, his knowledge of geology, and his thoroughness, he was called on to take an increasing number of administrative duties, becoming Head of the Regional Geology Section in 1966 and Assistant Division Chief in 1968. Much of the scientific work Dave wanted to do was sacrificed to make time to help others and to do the necessary administrative work needed to strengthen the operations of the Survey.

He had memberships in and was active in several professional organizations. Among them were the American Institute of Professional Geologists, American Quaternary Association, Clay Minerals Society, Mineralogical Association of Canada, Mineralogical Society of America, Ohio Academy of Science (Fellow), Ohio Geological Society, and Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists. Honorary society memberships included the Society of Sigma Xi, Phi Beta Kappa, and Phi Kappa Phi (scholarship). He was member of the Phi Kappa Tau social fraternity.

All those who knew Dave recognized him as both a scholar and a gentleman. To those who knew him intimately he was a very warm, kind, and genuine friend. Dave was always willing to lend a helping hand on anything from a geologic matter to a routine chore that needed to be done. He loved fun and especially liked to surprise people with unusual gifts or good-natured horseplay. This was Dave's way of expressing his deep feeling for his friends and associates.

He was an inveterate collector of rocks, rock products, Indian artifacts, guns, books, and anything unusual. Dave had the knack of always having just what someone needed for a display or for giving a talk. His collection of color slides on geology, nature, and historical sites provided a vast resource for anything from a formal talk on clay research to an account of the history of Ohio's early iron districts. He loved to paint and sketch and was good at both. One of his greatest interests came late in his life: he became Editor-in-Chief of *The Ohio Journal of Science*, the house organ of

the Ohio Academy of Science. Although he put together only two issues before his untimely death, he had developed a deep interest in the *Journal* and found great personal satisfaction in being its editor. Dave was an extremely modest person by nature, but just before his death he expressed his pride in *The Ohio Journal of Science* and in the part he was playing in its publication.

Dave crowded many interests into his life and frequently lamented the fact that there were so many things to do and so little time in which to do them. There was less time than he realized. Dave suffered a fatal heart attack while hiking with friends in the beautiful Clear Creek valley of Hocking County, Ohio, early Sunday morning, September 2, 1973. He is survived by his wife, Thelma Jane Webb, his mother, four brothers, three sisters, and many friends.

Publications of David K. Webb, Jr.

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- 1966 (with H.R. COLLINS) *The Hanging Rock Iron Region of Ohio*. The Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio.
- 1967 (and H.R. COLLINS) Geologic aspects of a recent landslide in Vinton County, Ohio. *Ohio J. Sci.* **67**, no. 2.
- 1972 (with LESTER J. WALTERS, *et al.*) Mercury contamination and its relation to other physiochemical parameters in the western basin of Lake Erie. *15th Conf. Great Lakes Res. Proc.*, p. 306-316.
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