

Memorial for Phil Hoehn

Phil Hoehn was a longtime UC Berkeley Maps and Earth Sciences Librarian and an early member of the Western Association of Map Libraries (WAML), having joined in 1969, just two years after the organization was founded. He passed away on February 6, 2023, at the age of eighty-one.

Phil majored in geography at UCLA and earned an MLS from UC Berkeley in 1967 and began his career as the Map Librarian at UC Berkeley's Bancroft Library in 1969. He was also given responsibility for the map collection in the General Library, and when the Map Library was merged with the Earth Sciences map collection, he was made head of that unit, which was eventually known as the Earth Sciences and Map Library. He stayed in that position until he retired in 1996. Phil also worked as the assistant map librarian/cataloger at Stanford after he left UC Berkeley, and then he left to be the cataloger for David Rumsey's map collection.

Phil developed and managed the California Maps Project, which was a project to catalog and reclassify some 21,000 maps held in the collections of UC Berkeley and UCLA. During the project, Phil decided to include geographic location data in the records for the California Land Case Maps. These are rough manuscript maps that have been used in evidence in court cases having to do with Spanish and Mexican land grants.

Phil spent four years, starting in June 2015, organizing the almost 4,000 maps in the California Historical Society's map collection. Together with Diane M. T. North, he held the inaugural gathering in 1978 of the California Map Society. Phil published on fire insurance maps, and together with UCSB map librarian Mary Larsgaard, he wrote *Dictionary of Abbreviations and Acronyms in Geographic Information Systems, Cartography, and Remote Sensing*.

Julie Sweetkind-Singer, who is the Associate University Librarian for Collections and Public Services at Stanford University, said: "Phil was instrumental in helping to get tens of thousands of David's maps and atlases cataloged and ready to move to the Rumsey Map Center. It would have been a much harder hill to climb without him."

Phil was an unassuming quiet man with a dry wit and sense of humor. I learned to wait for him. When I was working with him, I'd ask him a cataloging question. Inevitably there would be a VERY long pause and then he would answer my questions and tell me what he knew. Conversations of any kind were that way. He thought before he spoke and one had to learn to slow down and to take the conversation at his pace. It was actually quite calming.

He love of maps knew no bounds. He was active all through his years and often would send me maps through snail mail to add to the Stanford collection, send me links to maps he thought we should get, and attended events both in person and virtually. I think the thing I'll remember most about Phil was his kindness. He never had a harsh word or spoke poorly of anyone. He cared about others and cared about the organizations that he made stronger with his presence, particularly WAML. His contribution to our profession was massive.”

Julie Gelfand, of UC Irvine Libraries, said: “I was so saddened to read this news. Shortly after I came to UCI in 1981, I met Phil at the first UC Maps meeting I attended at UC Davis and he was instrumental in my taking on responsibilities for what map resources we had at Irvine. I definitely recall hosting the 1989 WAML meeting where we took a field trip to Catalina Island and as Kathy Rankin recorded in her interview with Phil many years later, that was really special for him. He was a wonderful and helpful colleague when he was at Berkeley, Stanford, the California Historical Society and the David Rumsey collection, and his engagement in numerous professional organizations was always significant and well-intentioned. His contributions to map librarianship are a long legacy not to mention the special relationships he fostered with everyone. I always looked forward to seeing him whenever I was in Berkeley, at MAGIRT or WAML meetings and so appreciated his friendship.

This is a huge loss for our community and I thank you for the heartfelt obituary that was provided.”

Alberta Auringer Wood, who is Honorary Research Librarian at the Memorial University of Newfoundland Libraries (Retired), said: “I was saddened to learn of the passing of Phil Hoehn. He was one of the WAML members with whom I had contact, mostly via email, over the years. I was very impressed by him and his achievements. Being on the eastern edge of North America for most of my career, our opportunities for in person contact were not many. I often wished that I lived out West so that I could have participated more often. I appreciate having this wonderful biography about him, I am glad that I knew him, but sad that it was so hampered by distance! Thank you for this, Randal, Heiko and Susan.”

Here is a link to Phil's obituary: <https://update.lib.berkeley.edu/2023/03/03/in-memoriam-phil-hoehn-1941-202>

