

## **UTSA College of Sciences honors the legacy of Associate Professor Emeritus Weldon Woolf Hammond, Jr.**

The UTSA College of Sciences is remembering the life and legacy of Weldon Woolf Hammond, Jr., Associate Professor Emeritus in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, who passed away on July 2, 2022. A service celebrating his memory was held July 25 in San Antonio.

Hammond was recruited to UTSA in 1977 by Peter T Flawn, the President of UTSA at the time and for whom the Flawn Sciences Building is named. “Dr. Hammond was instrumental in developing the College of Sciences and the Department of Earth and Environmental Science at UTSA,” according to Janis Bush, Chair of the UTSA Department of Integrative Biology. “As a long-time resident of San Antonio, he took pride in the development of UTSA to where it is today.”

Hammond’s research focused on groundwater age and groundwater-flow in the Edwards aquifer and other karst-aquifer systems in Central Texas. He was the first faculty member appointed to the Amy Shelton and V.H. McNutt Distinguished Professorship in Geology. He taught many undergraduate and graduate courses in geological sciences and engineering geology. Throughout his career, Hammond served on many graduate student thesis committees, supervised masters students, and oversaw the first dissertation research in the Environmental Sciences and Engineering doctoral program. He retired from UTSA in 2012.

Hammond enlisted in the U.S. Navy Reserve in 1954 and later joined the Naval ROTC Unit at The University of Texas at Austin, from where he graduated with a B.A. in geology with a minor in mathematics. He served as a naval officer throughout the world in several active duty and reserve assignments. His service at UTSA was interrupted when he was recalled to active duty in the Persian Gulf War. He retired from the Navy with the rank of Captain.

Hammond worked with University and San Antonio community leaders to establish UTSA’s Center for Water Research (CWR) and obtain funding from the state legislature to support graduate student research. The goal of the CWR was to promote a multidisciplinary approach to address water resource issues in San Antonio and South Texas. More than 50 grants were made to at least 30 students in geosciences, environmental science, and civil engineering in support of their graduate research as a result of Hammond’s efforts.

In 2013, the Dr. Weldon W. Hammond, Jr. Endowed Distinguished Professorship in Hydrogeology was established with generous contributions from his family and friends in the San Antonio community.

Hammond was a mentor to many UTSA faculty. Hongjie Xie, Professor in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, said that “Weldon was always there when I needed help or advice

to advance my career, and his CWR provided essential support for quite a few of my early graduate students.”

“Weldon introduced me to many hydrological sites around San Antonio, which I later incorporated into field trips for undergraduate and graduate students and geoscience teachers,” said Alan Dutton, Associate Professor Emeritus and former department chair.

Saugata Datta, the first Dr. Weldon W. Hammond, Jr. Endowed Distinguished Professor in Hydrogeology, met Hammond when he joined the faculty in 2019 , and saw “how passionate Dr. Hammond was about the role of the Institute for Water Research, Sustainability and Policy.” Datta continued, “He introduced me to ‘water people’ around the state and city and offered to go with me to talk to them about the Institute.”

Bush adds, “You could always count on Dr. Hammond to stop by your office to tell stories about growing up in San Antonio, working on the family farm in Kansas, his time in the Navy, or tractors.”

Hammond lent his hydrologic expertise to the benefit of the community by serving, for example, on the SAWS Citizens Advisory Panel, the Mayor of San Antonio’s Select Panel on Water Quality over the Edwards Recharge Zone, a Texas Senate Special Committee on Water Quality and the Edwards Aquifer, and on the San Antonio River Foundation (SARA) Board of Directors and as Chair of the SARA Environmental Committee. Hammond conducted impactful work in rural Honduras to better understand the occurrence and availability of groundwater in interbedded volcanic and sedimentary deposits, prospected for suitable locations for well drilling, and worked with NGOs and local community leaders to develop sustainable water-supply systems in rural Honduran villages.

Hammond’s legacy at UTSA will forever be remembered by the students, faculty and community members whose lives he touched with his research and service.

Donations to the Dr. Weldon W. Hammond, Jr. Endowed Distinguished Professor endowment may be made online or by contacting [Taylor.Bird@utsa.edu](mailto:Taylor.Bird@utsa.edu).