

FAMOUS SURVEYORS

Throughout history, explorers, inventors, navigators, soldiers, and great statesmen practiced surveying as part of their professional careers. Some of those exceptional surveyors we remember are listed here.

Benjamin Banneker
 Len Beadell
 Daniel Boone
 Admiral John Bossler
 William Austin Burt
 Captain James Cook (navigator)
 Christopher M. Cooper
 Walt Disney (subdivision maps)
 Andrew Ellicott
 John Ericsson
 Sir George Everest
 Peter Fidler
 Sir John Forrest
 Malcolm Fraser
 Edwin Rowan
 Captain John C. Fremont
 Carl Friedrich Gauss
 Per Ivar Gjengedal
 Edmund Gunter
 Thomas Jefferson
 Joseph Jenckes
 Harry Johnston
 Meriweather Lewis & William Clark
 Abraham Lincoln
 Liu Hui
 Colonel William Light
 Sir Alexander Mackenzie
 Charles Mason & Jeremiah Dixon
 Kenneth Mason
 Metius, Major
 Sir Thomas Mitchell
 Peter Pond
 John Septimus Roe
 General William Roy
 Willem Schermerhorn
 Willebrord Snell
 Frank Swannell
 Ruell Stanley Trent
 David Thompson
 Henry David Thoreau
 George Washington

The breed of exceptional surveyors has not died with these great men. There are surveyors in our midst who have earned that distinction through lifelong engagement in furthering the future of the profession. We tell their stories as the details become available to us. This April, the *ACSM Bulletin* learned of a great honor bestowed on John Fenn, long-time NSPS member and its past president. Then, early in May, we learned that NOAA/NGS has appointed another of our colleagues to lead the NGS State Advisor Program. That individual is AAGS's Ronnie Taylor. Both men have served their profession with distinction. What follows are exclusive interviews with a land surveyor and a geodesist who both believe that one of the oldest professions on Earth is also one of the greatest. We begin with Mr. John R. Fenn.



John R. Fenn

John R. Fenn, founder of a thriving surveying, civil engineering, and consulting firm in 1978, was awarded an honorary doctoral degree by Ferris State University during spring commencement exercises.

This is not the first time John Fenn has earned recognition for his steadfast support of the surveying profession. He was named Surveyor of the Year in 1998 by the Michigan Society of Professional Surveyors, and in 2005, Ferris State named their new digital photogrammetry and GIS laboratory after him. Fenn is also an honorary member of Lambda Sigma, the national honor society. Within the National Society of Professional Surveyors, John Fenn is known to be a strong supporter of the society's education and publication programs. He serves on the Board of the CST program, is involved in the TrigStar program, and he strongly supports the progressive evolution of *Surveying and Land Information Science* as a premier academic journal in the field of surveying and land information science. The honorary Ph.D. degree John Fenn received acknowledges the service and support he has given to Ferris over many years. Apart from making a generous donation towards establishing the new lab, Fenn is also a member of the Surveying Engineering Program Advisory Committee at Ferris and has been a member of curriculum advisory committees at a number of other Michigan institutes of higher learning.

But there is no better recognition than the salute one gets from one's peers. They are the surveyors he has met through his involvement in the National Society of Professional Surveyors. The 2007 president of NSPS, Rita Lumos, has this to say about John Fenn:

"John is someone who truly believes in giving back to the profession that he feels has been so good to him. He generously gives of his time as well as his treasure. When John is asked to undertake a task on behalf of the profession, he dives in with both feet and gives it his all. He has done this with enthusiasm for a number of years. So many times people become active, go through the officer and chair functions in their organizations, and then they disappear. That is certainly not true of Mr. Fenn. He continues to contribute in many ways, both in his home state of Michigan and at the national level. He is a terrific role model for all of us."

MAKING THE SURVEYING PROFESSION "BETTER"

"Within the context of the Global Village, surveyors are increasingly working in the international market place. This is placing pressures on our education and training and the role that we see ourselves playing in society. The international push for cadastral reform, land and geographic information systems, improved urban management, environmental management and sustainable development is creating almost unlimited opportunities for our profession—if we are prepared to grasp them" [Jan P. Williamson, FIG Commission 7 chair].



During its spring commencement exercises in May, Ferris State University conferred on John R. Fenn an honorary doctoral degree in science and engineering. The distinction bestowed on Mr. Fenn by Ferris State honors his exemplary public service to promote surveying as a profession. Recognizing the far-reaching impact education has on all professions, John Fenn has devoted a great deal of time and personal resources to advance surveying education in his state of Michigan. The ACSM Bulletin asked Mr. Fenn to share with our readers some of the highlights of his rich professional life.

ACSM BULLETIN: When did surveying education become a major focus for you?

JOHN FENN: My involvement in promoting advanced education for surveyors began around 1990 when I was asked to become a member of the Curriculum Advisory Board of Macomb Community College. The school had been offering surveying classes for a number of years; in fact, I had taken all of the classes the school had to offer in the early 70s. It was during this time I became acquainted with Sayed Hashimi, an instructor from Ferris State University who was also serving on the Board. Sayed

encouraged me to get involved with Ferris State University, which of course I was excited to do. When I was the president of my state society, I also became involved with Michigan Tech as a member of its advisory board. I continue to be active with all three schools. While I feel a closeness to all three schools, Ferris became my school. I developed a close relationship with the faculty, the administration, and, of course, the students. I believe this was partly due to the fact that the school is only three hours from my home versus the ten hours I would have to travel to get to Michigan Tech.

ACSM BULLETIN: What are the outcomes you are most proud of?

JOHN FENN: My wife Lynn and I take personal pride in the annual scholarship awards we fund at Ferris State and Michigan Tech. These scholarships began in 1993 with a contribution of \$1,000 to the scholarship funds at both schools. Six or seven years later, my wife encouraged me (by accusing me of "being cheap") to increase the scholarships to \$2,500. We believe this is the best investment we could have made in the surveying profession. About five years ago, Lynn and I decided to increase our involvement at both schools by setting up an endowment fund. We committed \$50,000 to each school to be spread over



a number of years. The endowment ultimately led to the establishment of the Fenn GIS and Photogrammetry Laboratory at Ferris State.

ACSM BULLETIN: What does the future hold?

JOHN FENN: We want to continue to contribute to the profession through scholarships and by serving on the curriculum advisory boards of the two colleges.

ACSM BULLETIN: You currently

serve in an advisory capacity at Michigan Technological University. Can you outline some of the challenges the committee faces in forming a curriculum for the future surveyor and mapper?

JOHN FENN: Sure. Michigan Tech's IAB (Industrial Advisory Board) consists of a diverse group of individuals representing the surveying profession. It is comprised of private practitioners, state DOT's, federal government, software companies, and large surveying/engineering firms. Each committee member typically brings to the table specific opinions on curriculum that would best fit their respective area of expertise. Many ideas are offered, and the discussion among the members which has led to developing a very strong curriculum, indeed.

ACSM BULLETIN: Is there a particular direction that modern surveying curriculum is taking?

JOHN FENN: At MTU the strategy is to be current and become more progressive while still maintaining traditional surveying techniques and methods. Modern technology and communication systems have required that students acquire new skills and adequate knowledge of the systems. Students are taught to understand how electronic distance measuring, total stations and robotic total stations, digital levels, GPS, data collectors, and wireless communications work. They are also trained in the use of current mapping and design software to process information and prepare drawings. Internet-based courses are being developed that would give students access to prominent individuals in the field of surveying. The MTU surveying/engineering curriculum is designed to be interdisciplinary and promote undergraduate research activities with other departments, such as civil engineering, forestry, and geological engineering. These interdisciplinary projects help various disciplines understand each other's roles better.

ACSM BULLETIN: Is technology the sole force shaping surveying education programs currently, or are there other factors as well?

JOHN FENN: The "greying" of the profession may be a factor. There are studies that show that retiring surveyors are not being replaced at an appropriate rate. Modern technology has been implemented to perform the work that often took several individuals to accomplish, but, surveying is infinitely more than just pushing a button. It's what happens after the data have been collected—the computations to remove error, the analyses of the spatial data, their interpretation, and the solutions developed on the basis of such data—that matters. To be successful and competitive in today's marketplace, surveyors need to be well educated technically, understand the legal implications of their work, and be savvy managers. In a nutshell, they need to be well educated and be exposed to real-life work experiences as part of their studies.

ACSM BULLETIN: What's the most rewarding part of endowing a scholarship? Are the beneficiaries tracked to determine the "rate of return on investment"?

JOHN FENN: Endowing a scholarship allows the donor to have a direct impact on the professional development of the student receiving the award. I can't think of any better way of leaving a lasting legacy than being part, albeit in the background, of a young person's success. The alumni office does their very best to stay in touch with scholarship recipients. However, unless graduates notify us of address changes, promotions, and significant accomplishments and/or milestones, it is very hard to keep tabs on them. We do employ research assistants to scour media releases that mention Ferris State University, but even this method can be unreliable.

ACSM BULLETIN: Who would typically qualify for a scholarship?

JOHN FENN: The donors may establish criteria for their scholarship as they see fit, with the guidance of the University Advancement Office. Possible criteria may include: program of study, GPA, extracurricular activity, financial need, leadership experience, and work experience. The criteria may be as broad or as specific as the donor wishes. The only criteria not recognized are preferences for students of a particular race, gender, or religion.

ACSM BULLETIN: How many scholarships are awarded and in what tracks?

JOHN FENN: I am not sure how many total scholarships we fund, but within the College of Technology we offer approximately 90 scholarships with 25 of them being endowed. The remainder are annual scholarships that are evaluated by the donor each year.

ACSM BULLETIN: What are the graduates supported by the scholarship now doing?

JOHN FENN: As I mentioned before, we have no "official" tracking program for scholarship recipients. Corporate scholarship donors create outstanding brand loyalty among the award recipients. Some of them track the recipients and offer internships once they have gotten to know the students, with the possibility of ultimately hiring them.

ACSM BULLETIN: It has been two years since endowing the John R. and Lynda D. Fenn Digital Photogrammetry and GIS Laboratory at Ferris State. What impact do you feel this has made on the surveying program there thus far?

JOHN FENN: The students attending Ferris are the best educated students in the surveying profession and in the country. Ferris State has the most up-to-date professors and equipment of any program, in part due to the Digital Photogrammetry and GIS Laboratory.

ACSM BULLETIN: As chair of the NSPS Private Practice Committee, what message would you like to give to surveyors with regard to supporting surveying education?

JOHN FENN: Support our profession. This can be done in a number of ways—by becoming a member of an advisory committee, by promoting the professional among the young through presentations, competitions, and other means. It is so simple to get involved, and you would be amazed at the personal satisfaction that you get from such an involvement. Look into a scholarship no matter what amount you have to invest. The cost of higher education is skyrocketing, and students are always grateful for any support offered. Get in touch with your colleagues; invariably, they would help you get started. Also, look into an endowment. Once you have met your commitment, the



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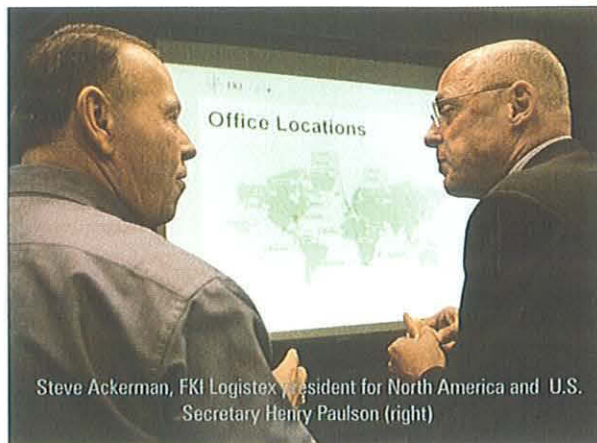
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benefit of supporting your profession will go on forever. If we do not take an interest in the surveying profession, I believe, in time, we will be reduced to a trade, and I am sure none of us wants that to happen. If we are willing to take responsibility for million dollar projects and do a darn good job at it, then let's continue our expertise by supporting the education of our profession.

ACSM BULLETIN: If you were asked to design a one page recruitment flyer for a surveying program, what message would you like the flier to convey to young people deciding on their future career?

JOHN FENN: A career like no other. Exciting, mind challenging, investigative, and respected. Inside and outside work that is rewarding, fun, has many toys, and is high tech. Just the fit for men and women who like to steer their own ship. Then, as a tag line, I would use the following quote: "Every man owes a part of his time and money to the development of the industry in which he is engaged." — Theodore Roosevelt.



Steve Ackerman, FKI Logistex President for North America and U.S. Secretary Henry Paulson (right)

Investing in the United States

FKI Logistex®, a global company specializing in integrated material handling solutions, hosted U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson at its St. Louis manufacturing plant and North American headquarters on May 11, as part of the Bush administration drive for more direct foreign investment in the United States. FKI Logistex is a division of Loughborough, UK-based FKI plc. FKI Logistex provides material handling solutions for airports, postal facilities, parcel distribution, manufacturing operations, library automation, and for warehouse and distribution facilities. "Our continuing success depends on the technology solutions we can provide to our customers," Ackerman told Paulson. "New developments like our Technology and Education Center (TEC) and the UniSort® MXT™ throughput-enhancing software module are answering customer demands for increased efficiency in their operations. FKI Logistex's investment in the United States continues to pay great dividends for our company, our customers, and the global economy." (<http://www.fkilogistex.com/media-center/>)