

Spotlight on Philanthropy: William “Bill” Wallace, ENV SP, M.ASCE



William “Bill” Wallace, ENV SP, M.ASCE became fascinated with chemical science at an early age, eventually combining both chemical and civil engineering in a long and varied career. Bill earned a B.S. degree in Chemical Engineering from Clarkson University, and a M.S. in Management from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He also completed the Harvard Business School Advanced Management Program. Becoming director of CH2M’s hazardous waste management program in 1981, Bill worked with a wide range of engineering disciplines, especially civil, environmental and geotechnical, in the cleanup of our nation’s uncontrolled hazardous waste sites. Later, Bill became CH2M’s Liaison Delegate to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, where he worked on the issues of climate change, and the measurement and reporting of sustainable performance.

About 10 years ago, Bill was invited to join ASCE’s Committee on Sustainability. Since then, he has been active on the Committee, including developing and recording a 25 module ASCE on-line course, “Engineering for a Sustainable Future”. Bill also developed and chaired ASCE’s first International Conference on Sustainable Infrastructure, held in Long Beach, CA in 2014.

Bill was the creator and lead designer for Envision™ Sustainable Infrastructure Rating System. Through this work, he was recognized by *Engineering News-Record* as a “Top 25 Newsmakers of 2013”. In 2014, he was awarded the ASCE’s President’s Medal for “...leadership in the field of sustainable infrastructure.”

In renewing his 2015 membership, Bill saw the opportunity to contribute specifically to ASCE’s Sustainability Fund. He says, “I believe that sustainability is the most important issue of the 21st century, and that civil engineers have the expertise as well as the obligation to help the U.S. as well as the world achieve conditions of sustainability.” Bill’s gift to the Sustainability Fund will provide support for ASCE’s sustainability initiatives. The Fund makes resources available to help civil engineers design and deliver infrastructure projects that contribute to society’s environmental, economic and social well-being.

In 2015, the ASCE Board of Direction approved the Committee on Sustainability’s incredibly ambitious but necessary goal: to transform the practice of civil engineering in order to deal effectively with changing environmental conditions. As Bill explained it, “Many decades of unsustainable practices are altering significantly the conditions under which civil engineering projects are expected to operate. Today, long-held assumptions about engineering parameters such as ambient temperature, storm intensity and flood levels are no longer reliable. Unless we change our standards and practices, the projects we design and deliver today could pose a significant risk to public health, safety and welfare in the not-too-distant future.”

Bill believes that civil engineers have the knowledge and the talent to take on this challenge. He explains that, “giving one’s time and donating dollars to help the profession make headway on these critical issues is extremely important, not only for us, but for future generations.”

As the stewards of society’s physical and environmental infrastructure, it is imperative that civil engineers lead this transformation in civil engineering planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance. Bill’s generosity can help change the way civil engineers design and deliver projects in a new and challenging operating environment. With his help and the help of others, the ASCE Foundation can continue to support these efforts. As Bill noted, “By volunteering our time and donating to the Foundation, civil engineers can move society towards a more sustainable future.”