

LARIC HAWKINS - A foundation member of ASEG.

Laric Hawkins was a leading proponent of the establishment of the ASEG. He served as the 1st Vice President on the initial 1970-71 ASEG Federal Executive and then also in the next year and also as Chair of the inaugural Education standing committee. Laric was the first recipient of the Gold Medal, the highest honour in the Society, in 1985. His contribution to the geophysics profession is commemorated in the Laric Hawkins Award presented at each ASEG conference.

Laric Villiers Hawkins was born in 1930 in Seyne, near Avignon, south-east France. He came to Australia with his family in March 1935, to settle in Mona Vale. He attended Sydney University where he met Enid who was to become his wife. They have three children; Deanne, Raoul and Guy. Laric was a part time sailor and owned a yacht. He succumbed to cancer in 1985.



Laric at an unknown time

Laric taught geophysics at UNSW from 1958 to 1985, as a Lecturer in 1958 -61, Senior Lecturer from 1961-69 and Assoc. Professor

from 1969-85. He was assisted by two other staff members, Dr Bob Whiteley and Dr Ifti Qureshi. Laric was an inspiring lecturer to many well-known graduates. PhD students he supervised included John Ringis, David Falvey, Jeffrey Weissel and Ted Tyne. Laric provided great mentoring and guidance to many geophysics students including Brian Spies and John Lean.

Geophysics group at the Uni of N.S.W.



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Left to Right: Brian Plummer, Barry Long and strange dog, Richard Haren (rear), Robert Whiteley, Laric Hawkins, Ifti Qureshi.

Following his death, his memory was perpetuated through the establishment of the Laric V. Hawkins prize for Geophysics awarded to the best postgraduate project work involving a substantial geophysics component

He taught all fields of geophysics but his main interests and what he became famous for, were marine geophysics (in particular, reflection seismic) and land seismic refraction. The latter interest led to his

widely known 1961 publication “The Reciprocal Method of Routine Shallow Seismic Refraction Investigations”, a cornerstone of engineering seismic methods and the basis of further research into refraction methods in the 1970s and early 1980s.



Laric instructing a student from the Philippines on the use of a gravimeter in the early 1960s.

Laric spent a sabbatical at Lamont-Doherty Geological Observatory of Columbia University, New York (LDGO), in 1964/5 and his collaboration with its Director Dr (“Doc”) Maurice Ewing, resulted in an extraordinary period in the promotion and development of marine geophysical research in all the marine areas surrounding Australia. This was, Laric’s most important and lasting contribution to geophysical research and training in Australia.

Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, with his contacts and close working relationships with the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and the Geological Survey of NSW (GSNSW), Laric was able to arrange for GSNSW and UNSW scientists to participate in several research cruises in the Tasman Sea and over the South East Australian Shelf, on HMAS “Kimbla”, HMAS “Diamantina” and HMAS “Moresby.”

One of the most notable and important marine geophysical investigations that Laric was responsible for arranging and executing was a two-ship crustal refraction survey across several crossings of the Coral Sea in 1967. That involved working and making arrangements with Lamont, The RAN, the Australian Army explosives department and several other organisations.

In 1968, further co-operation between LDGO and UNSW resulted in participation by a number of UNSW scientists in several 60 day research cruises in the Southern Ocean between Australia and Antarctica on board the US Navy research vessel "Eltanin".

In 1975/76 Laric spent a sabbatical attached to a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project to assist the Committee for Co-ordination of Offshore Prospecting in East Asia (CCOP) based in Bangkok, Thailand. This paved the way for further involvement of Australian and other geophysicists in CCOP training and marine geophysical investigation programmes. This experience, together with Laric's concept of translating deep sea techniques to shallow water techniques, in turn influenced the development of GSNSW marine geophysical methods under John Ringis, applied on state-wide shallow marine and estuarine investigation projects and local engineering geophysical projects.

In recognition of Laric's contribution to the work of CCOP, its Committee appointed him to the honorary role of Australia's Special Adviser to CCOP. In this capacity Laric attended several annual sessions of CCOP, the last in 1983 in Kuala Lumpur, where he participated fully in the meeting and post meeting celebrations.

In addition to his teaching commitments, Laric advised on geophysical solutions to engineering problems and in the early 1980s was a senior consultant to a specialist engineering geophysical company, providing advice and mentoring until his untimely death.

Laric's research papers and teaching materials from 1970 to 1985 are available for reference in the UNSW Archives, reference CN 784.

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HEADING FOR CORAL SEA



U.S.S. Clementine, which is to engage in a scientific expedition in the Coral Sea with the American vessel Verna, coming in to berth yesterday morning. Both vessels leave Townsville this morning on their way south.



The scientists from the University of New South Wales, Murray John Rings, Dave Fisher and Lars Hestberg (center) who will work with a party of Americans on Verna.

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