



One of the great leaders of the Department of Civil Engineering at Queen's passed away on 26 November 2013. Dave Turcke had a profound impact on Queen's through his ten year leadership of the Department of Civil Engineering, his diverse research career, and his dedication to students and teaching. His guidance shaped the Department of Civil Engineering into one of the most successful in the country, and his open and friendly manner won him great respect with students, colleagues, and alumni.

Dave Turcke joined Queen's in 1974 after studying at Carleton University and completing a PhD in structural engineering at the University of Waterloo. His early research was on finite element modelling of structures and he developed two very popular graduate courses in this area that attracted students from both civil and mechanical engineering. His openness to new ideas and his collaborative nature led him to extend his research into coastal engineering through the study of the mechanics of breakwater armour units. In the 1990s, he moved into sustainable engineering by investigating structural applications of bamboo and other natural materials. He also played a critical role in pioneering innovations in personal microcomputing at Queen's during the 1980s.

Dave Turcke's greatest legacy at Queen's, though, was his ten year term as Head of the Department of Civil Engineering.

When he started as Head in 1995, he faced the challenge of renewing a department with a steep retirement curve in an uncertain time of drastic funding cuts and declining enrolment. By the end of his term, he had implemented several innovations that have been the foundation for the success of the department today. One of his first innovations was to oversee the revision of the undergraduate curriculum to incorporate professional skills such as problem-solving and communication skills into formal short courses. This approach to educating well-rounded civil engineering graduates as opposed to technical specialists has been the cornerstone of the curriculum ever since, and has both engaged students and won the praise of employers.

Dave also recognized that links to industry and alumni were vital to attract students to the program, and thus developed a novel "Building Partnerships" strategy of connecting with industry that included an annual Industry Open House, the Building Partnerships newsletter, the Robert and Joyce Jones Civil Engineering Forum, and a comprehensive marketing strategy. The Industry Open House, in particular, has become the highlight of the year, attracting over 30 different companies with a job fair and collaborative discussions between faculty members and industry partners. Most of the industry representatives are also graduates of our program.

During this pivotal time, Dave Turcke was also responsible for hiring the majority of current staff and faculty members. He deftly managed a great transition in the department with compassion, humour, and foresight - he is fondly recognized for his multiple roles as a mentor, friend, and colleague throughout the department. He would also routinely open his home to students and colleagues including regularly hosting departmental events. Such hospitality was simply part and parcel of Dave's generosity but had a lasting impact on creating a genuine team spirit in the department.

Dave Turcke lived by the axiom "Do what makes you happy, find your passion, the rest will fall into place." We have all benefitted greatly by Dave's tremendous energy in pursuing his passion.