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In Memoriam

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Source: Journal of Coastal Research, 27(4) : 799-800

Published By: Coastal Education and Research Foundation

URL: https://doi.org/10.2112/11A-00005.1

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Journal of Coastal Research	27	4	799–800	West Palm Beach, Florida	July 2011

IN MEMORIAM

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Dr. Gregory William Stone (1957–2011)

The Coastal Research community mourns the passing of Gregory W. Stone, James P. Morgan Distinguished Professor in Coastal Studies Institute, director of the Wave-Current Information System (WAVCIS) program, and internationally-renowned coastal researcher. Stone unexpectedly passed away on February 17, 2011, of undetermined causes.

Stone was a very well-respected member of the Louisiana State University (LSU) School of the Coast and Environment Faculty who served as director of the Coastal Studies Institute (CSI) and taught in addition to advising graduate students in the Department of Oceanography and Coastal Sciences. He graduated, with honors, with a bachelor's degree from the University of Ulster, Ireland, where he showed an early aptitude and interest in coastal science. Dr. Bill Carter at the University of Ulster befriended Greg and encouraged him to pursue graduate work in this field of interest. Next, he was accepted at West Florida University (WFU) in Pensacola, Florida to work with renowned coastal geologist, Dr. James P. Morgan, who had just retired from the Department of Geology and CSI at LSU and had taken a part-time teaching position. During this period of Greg's life, Dr. Morgan became a great friend, educational advisor, and surrogate father. He earned an MS degree at WFU and enrolled at the University of Maryland to work toward a Ph.D. His doctoral research focused on sediment transport along the western Florida coast. After graduation he returned to WFU for a couple of years as a visiting professor. Two important things happened during this period: He met his wife Ann, and Dr. Morgan encouraged Greg to apply for a coastal geographer position in the Department of Geography and Anthropology at LSU. Greg got the job and moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana; however, Ann lived in Birmingham, Alabama. He and Ann maintained their relationship for three and a half years by taking turns driving to Birmingham, Alabama, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, or Pensacola, Florida. Finally, Greg admitted that the long-distance romance was wearing them down and that they should get married. After marrying, Ann moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Soon they had a wonderful son named Carter Morgan Derek Stone: Carter for Dr. Bill Carter at the University of Ulster, Morgan for Dr. James P. Morgan, and Derek for Greg's beloved father.



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Once at LSU, Greg's research and teaching commitments expanded in scale and notoriety. He had a vision of creating a number of instrumented stations off the Louisiana coast to track the magnitudes and variations in coastal processes that drive coastal change. In order to make this vision a reality, he needed technical support. In 1997, he transferred to the CSI and accepted a faculty position in the Department of Oceanography and Coastal Sciences. His interest in the oceanic processes that drive changes in coasts of different types made him a perfect fit for CSI, and its 50-year history of similar research work. Their Field Support Group was capable of building the system now known as the Wave-Current Information System (WAVCIS). This program has received international acclaim for its technical innovation and scientific value. Currently, offshore data (waves, currents, wind, and temperature) from six stations are telemetered via satellite back to LSU where data are formatted and put on the internet in near real time. Government agencies, researchers, industry, fisherman, and others use the data routinely. Stone established himself as an internationally respected coastal scientist who produced cutting-edge research and attracted millions of dollars of research support to LSU for WAVCIS and other research projects.

It goes to the credit of Greg that he not only understood the multifaceted challenges in restoring Coastal Louisiana, but he also helped explain those complexities through his modeling efforts. He understood well that *off-the-shelf* numerical models intended for homogenous sandy environments were not appropriate for complex deltaic surficial sediment distribution patterns. With this understanding, he tweaked his numerical models that were most suited for Coastal Louisiana environment.

Restoring degrading barrier islands of Louisiana is a vital and expensive undertaking. Greg provided one of the best arguments in favor of restoration of these islands through his modeling efforts, which showed how these barrier islands provide wave and storm protection for bayside inland areas tens of kilometers landward of the barrier islands thereby protecting thousands of acres of back-barrier estuarine areas including human infrastructure. He also understood the importance of a sediment budget in barrier-island restoration and made some original contributions. The state of Louisiana is indebted to Greg's evaluation of impacts of dredging sand for coastal restoration from large sand bodies on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), *e.g.,* Ship Shoal, Tiger and Trinity Shoals, and Sabine Bank. These assessments have immensely helped coastal restoration planners in better planning of dredging these sand bodies.

The Wave-Current Information System was Greg's signature program and his legacy and surely is indicative of his vision. The metoceanic data collected by these offshore WAVCIS stations are not only important but also crucial for restoration and protection projects in Coastal Louisiana. Realizing the importance of these data, both federal and state governments have funded part of this program for many years. Using these data in his numerical models to predict Coastal Louisiana's future was another vital contribution Greg made to the state of Louisiana for their coastal restoration/protection efforts. The best tribute to Greg would be not only to continue these programs but also to develop upon them because they are vital for future restoration and protection of Coastal Louisiana.

In addition to being an outstanding researcher, Stone was an excellent teacher and advisor of graduate students. His classes provided students with a sound quantitative understanding of coastal change, and he prepared his graduate students for life after LSU by assigning them significant research problems, supporting them through graduation, and providing knowledgeable supervision. He funded, trained, and graduated 11 MS and 13 Ph.D. students. Greg always projected a genuine sense of happiness and feeling of accomplishment when he talked about his students, and they loved working for him in the congenial and educational environment he created. He was a valued colleague to his peers at LSU and around the world. He will be sincerely missed as an excellent coastal researcher and friend.

Donations can be made to the LSU Foundation Greg Stone Memorial to help maintain his WAVCIS program. Send contributions to LSU Foundation, 3838 West Lakeshore Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808. Donations may also be given online at www.lsufoundation.org/contribute.

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