Science Societies

In Memoriam

January 25, 2021

Peter Germann

I am sad to report that Peter Germann died on 6 Dec. 2020 in Bern, Switzerland. A 40-year member of SSSA, Peter was well known to many soil hydrologists for his work on preferential flows; a career of research work that was summarized in his 2013 book, *Preferential Flow: Stokes Approach to Infiltration and Drainage* (**https://bit.ly/3nSjnKx**).

Peter was born in St. Gallen Switzerland in 1944. He grew up in Bischofszell and later completed his education in St. Gallen. From 1963–1969, he studied for a degree in Forestry at ETH Zurich and then carried out research for a Ph.D. at the Eidgenössische Forschungsanstalt für Wald, Schnee und Landschaft (WSL) from 1969–1976. He continued his work in the Laboratories of Hydraulics, Glaciology, and Hydrology (VAW) from 1976–1980.

In 1980, Peter took up a post as Assistant Professor in the Department of Environmental Sciences at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville where he stayed until 1986. He then joined the Department of Soils and Crops at Rutgers University as an Associate Professor. In 1989, he became Professor at the Institute of Geography, University of Bern back in Switzerland where he stayed until he retired in 2009. He held an Emeritus position until 2015 and continued to publish papers until shortly before his death.

For most of his research career, Peter was a strong advocate for a reconsideration of the physics of water flow through soils and, in particular, for the limitations of the Darcy-Buckingham-Richards flow theory that is based on an assumption of the equilibration of capillary potentials in some (not clearly defined) “representative elementary volume” of soil pores. Our common interest resulted in the highly cited review paper in *Water Resources Research* on macropores and water flow in soils in 1982 (later revisited in 2013) and a sequence of three papers in the *Journal of Soil Science*, including a modeling approach based on kinematic wave theory that received very critical reviews. Peter later developed the kinematic wave approach into a theory of viscosity (rather than capillarity) dominated film flows subject to Stokes’ law during infiltration.

He was a careful experimentalist, and his thoughtful and good-humored approach to collaborations, discussions, and presentations will be missed by many in soil science.

—Submitted by Keith Beven, Lancaster University

Thomas L. Watschke

ASA and CSSA Fellow Thomas L. Watschke of State College, PA passed away peacefully on 18 Nov. 2020. He was born 12 Apr. 1944 in Charles City, IA.

Watschke received his B.S. in Horticulture from Iowa State University and his M.S. and Ph.D. in Agronomy from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Upon graduation in 1970, he moved to Penn State University (PSU) to join the turfgrass program in the Department of Crop and Soil Science.

Throughout his career at PSU, Watschke coordinated the undergraduate turfgrass program and advised all the students majoring in turfgrass science. In addition to resident instruction and research, he taught several online courses through PSU's World Campus.

His primary research focused on the use of plant growth regulators and herbicides for use in turfgrass systems. His most influential studies revealed the positive influence of turfgrass on mitigating the movement of fertilizers and pesticides into waterways. Other research areas included turfgrass physiology, turfgrass establishment methodology, and the evaluation of bio-stimulants. His environmental research supported the golf course turfgrass industry in several court cases. He retired from PSU in 2005 as Professor Emeritus.

In addition to his academic work, Watschke consulted at many golf courses around the world. He greatly enjoyed collaborating with former students and received great

satisfaction in witnessing their success.

Outside of his professional passions, Watschke enjoyed spending time with family and friends, fishing, golf, watching sports, and traveling to warm climates. Anyone who interacted with him, both personally and professionally, knew him to be a kind and caring individual. His magnetic personality could light up any room. He was an inspiration to many

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