

Memorial of Bennet Frank Buie 1910–1992

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Bennet Frank Buie died April 9, 1992, in Tallahassee, Florida, of complications following a stroke. He was born in 1910 in Patrick, South Carolina, and received his B.S. in geology from the University of South Carolina in 1930. He earned his M.S. at Lehigh University in 1932 and was awarded a scholarship to Harvard, where he received his M.A. in 1934 and Ph.D. in 1939. His dissertation, under E.S. Larsen, was published as part of a classic study on the igneous rocks of the Highwood Mountains of Montana.

In the years before World War II, he was employed by Ameranian Oil Company in Iran, Inland Exploration Company in Afghanistan, and Standard Oil of California in India. He remained in the Persian Gulf region during World War II as a U.S. Army officer, locating groundwater supplies. In recognition of his successful efforts, he was awarded the Bronze Medal by the U.S. Army and the Order of the Red Star by the Soviet Union.

After the war, he joined the faculty at the University of South Carolina and served as a geologist for the state survey and worked part-time for the U.S. Geological Survey. Much of his professional career was devoted to the study of the origin and occurrence of clay minerals. He became the leading authority on kaolin in Georgia, and he also visited most of the significant kaolin deposits elsewhere in the world.

In 1956 he was recruited by Florida State University to oversee the installation of a doctoral program in geology. He was the department head there until 1964, and remained as a professor until his retirement in 1981, when he was made an emeritus professor.

He was a Fellow of the Mineralogical Society of America, the Geological Society of America, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, as well as a member of several U.S. and foreign scientific organizations.

As a teacher and research supervisor, he was notorious for his insistence on good field procedure, meticulous data collection, and clarity of exposition, and he was well known for his thorough familiarity with the scientific literature. When he led students and colleagues in the field, a casual tour was never anticipated. They knew that they were in for a long and intense session on one outcrop, followed by a speedy, sometimes reckless—if not terror-filled—drive to the next.

Most of all he revered the English language (he was also fluent in French), and his students knew that there



would be no perfunctory readings of their thesis drafts. It was his practice to return their manuscripts after weeks of review with nearly every sentence marked in red. Because of his uncompromising standards of style and integrity, he served as a role model for the junior faculty and graduate students.

He is survived by his wife, four daughters, and seven grandchildren.

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