



Professor James Monroe Gere (1925 – 2008)

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James Monroe Gere, Professor Emeritus of Civil Engineering at Stanford University, died in Portola Valley, CA, on January 30, 2008. Jim Gere was born on June 14, 1925, in Syracuse, N.Y. He joined the U.S. Army Air Corps at age 17 in 1942, serving in England, France and Germany. After the war, he earned undergraduate and master's degrees in Civil Engineering from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1949 and 1951, respectively. He worked as an instructor and later as a Research Associate for Rensselaer between 1949 and 1952. He was awarded one of the first NSF Fellowships, and chose to study at Stanford. He received his Ph.D. in 1954 and was offered a faculty position in Civil Engineering, beginning a 34-year career of engaging his students in challenging topics in mechanics, and structural and earthquake engineering. He served as Department Chair and

Associate Dean of Engineering and in 1974 co-founded the John A. Blume Earthquake Engineering Center at Stanford. In 1980, Jim Gere also became the founding head of the Stanford Committee on Earthquake Preparedness, which urged campus members to brace and strengthen office equipment, furniture and other contents items that could pose a life safety hazard in the event of an earthquake. That same year, he was invited as one of the first foreigners to study the earthquake-devastated city of Tangshan, China. Jim retired from Stanford in 1988 but continued to be a most valuable member of the Stanford community as he continued to give freely of his time to advise students and to guide them on various field trips to the California earthquake country.

Jim Gere was known for his outgoing manner, his cheerful personality and wonderful smile, his athleticism and his skill as an educator in Civil Engineering. He authored nine textbooks on various engineering subjects starting in 1972 with *Mechanics of Materials*, a text that was inspired by his teacher and mentor Stephan P. Timoshenko. His other well known text books, used in engineering courses around the world, include: **Theory of Elastic Stability, co-authored with S. Timoshenko**; *Matrix Analysis of Framed Structures and Matrix Algebra for Engineers*, both co-authored with W. Weaver; *Moment Distribution*; *Earthquake Tables*; *Structural and Construction Design Manual*, co-authored with H. Krawinkler; and *Terra non firma: Understanding and preparing for earthquakes*, co-authored with H. Shah.

Respected and admired by students, faculty and staff at Stanford University, Professor Gere always felt that the opportunity to work with and be of service to young people both inside and outside the classroom was one of his great joys. He hiked frequently and regularly visited Yosemite and the Grand Canyon national parks. He made over 20 ascents of Half Dome in Yosemite as well as “John Muir hikes” of up to 50 miles in a day. In 1986 he hiked to the base camp of Mount Everest, saving the life of a companion on the trip. James was an active runner and completed the Boston Marathon at age 48, in a time of 3:13.

James Gere will be long remembered by all who knew him as a considerate and loving man whose upbeat good humor made aspects of daily life or work easier to bear. His last project (in progress and now being continued by his daughter Susan of Palo Alto) was a book based on the written memoirs of his great-grandfather, a Colonel (122d N.Y.) in the Civil War.

For the permission to post this entry, iMechanica is grateful to Cengage Learning, the publisher of Gere's *Mechanics of Materials*. A new edition of the book, due out in April, uses four colors.