

Lyman J. Ladner



1934-2023

Lyman Ladner was born July 5, 1934 on a farm in Colorado. After high school graduation, wanting to “see the world,” Lyman joined the US Marine Corps. The Corps, however, had other ideas for him. While stationed at Camp Pendleton in Southern California, the baseball coach noticed Lyman’s athletic abilities. Lyman then spent his military career playing baseball at USMC camps throughout the US.

Following his discharge, Lyman worked for General Electric as an electronics assembler. He then took an assignment installing telecommunications equipment in Casper, Wyoming, where he met his future wife, Marguerite, who was also originally from Colorado. They moved and settled in Denver, Colorado, where they were married. Lyman then applied for a job with the US Geological Survey as a negative engraver. He later transferred to the USGS facility in Menlo Park, California, where he eventually become a photogrammetric compiler working on every analog stereoplotter used in the Western Mapping Center (WMC). He became very interested in photogrammetric science and took a leave of absence to study photogrammetry at ITC in The Netherlands. Following his return to Menlo Park, Lyman continued working as a compiler; however, he really wanted to apply the training he received at ITC and was eventually transferred to the aerotriangulation group. He also went to night school at San Jose State University where he received a BS degree in mathematics. Lyman later studied analytical photogrammetry at the University of California Berkley under Professor James M. Anderson.

Continuing his career, Lyman became the Chief of the Technology Office, where he and his team were responsible for developing the Digital Orthophoto (DOQ) production software. This development led to the WMC becoming the DOQ Center for the USGS.

Lyman, along with personnel from USGS headquarters and other federal agencies, developed the initial DOQ pilot project into a full production operation at WMC. The DOQ production effort eventually evolved into the National Digital Orthophoto Program at USGS. He was awarded the US Department of the Interior’s Meritorious Service Award for his efforts. In 2020 he, along with his development team, were recognized nationally by the ASPRS with its Outstanding Technical Achievement Award. Eventually, Lyman advanced to become the Assistant Chief of the WMC Research and Development Office, the position he held until his retirement.

Throughout Lyman’s career, he never lost sight of the objectives of the USGS and his role in it. As he moved up in the organization he was always mindful of his co-workers and colleagues and tried to be helpful to them in achieving their goals. He was particularly encouraging to new employees as they began their careers at USGS. Beyond work, he was also helpful to his friends and volunteered in numerous community activities. He continued his love of baseball by routinely attending baseball games at Stanford University until he departed the Bay Area.

Lyman eventually moved to Southern California so that Marguerite, who had by then developed dementia, could spend time with her family. His devotion to Marguerite was unquestionably his first priority. Lyman was a devoted husband, gentleman, scholar, professional, and a friend to all who met him. He will be sorely missed by his many friends and acquaintances.