


On April 24, Prof. Greg Deierlein, Abbie Liel and Charlie Kircher also presented three related papers at sessions on the ATC 63 project and collapse assessment by nonlinear analysis at the 2008 ASCE Structures Congress in Vancouver.

On February 4, Prof. Helmut Krawinkler attended a symposium on “Recent Advances in Mechanics of Solids and Fluids” held in Vienna, Austria, to honor Prof. Franz Ziegler at the occasion of his 70th birthday.

On September 27, Prof. Greg Deierlein presented the paper, “Assessing Building Collapse Performance and Associated Requirements for Seismic Design” at the 2007 SEIAC Annual Convention. Co-authored by Carl Haselton (Ph.D. 2007), Abbie Liel (Ph.D. 2008) and Charlie Kircher (Ph.D. 1979) the paper describes to collapse assessment procedure employed in the recently completed ATC 63 project to standardize procedures for evaluating seismic response factors (R-factors) and related criteria for design.

In October, 2007, Prof. Jack Baker spoke on Ground motions and intensity measures as a link between seismology and engineering at the California Institute of Technology.

All phone numbers and email addresses remain the same.

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In Memoriam

C. Allin Cornell
1938-2007

With great sadness do we convey that Allin Cornell passed away after a two year struggle with cancer on December 14th, 2007, at the age of 69.

Allin was born in 1938 in Mobridge, South Dakota. He received his three academic degrees at Stanford— an A.B. degree (1960) in architecture, and an M.S. degree (1961) and Ph.D. degree (1964) in civil/structural engineering. His 1964 PhD dissertation, Stochastic Process Models in Structural Engineering, and his 1971 book, Probability, Statistics, and Decision for Civil Engineers (co-authored with Stanford Professor Jack Benjamin), laid the foundation for his pioneering work in modeling random environmental loads on structures and determining the structural response to those loads. His book remains a standard reference for students and researchers to this day.

After graduating, Allin served on the faculty at MIT from 1964 to 1983 before returning to Stanford as a research professor. At Stanford, he held a half-time research appointment while doing consulting work on a half-time basis. This arrangement allowed him to more easily facilitate the transfer of his research into practice, where it has seen widespread adoption due to his efforts.

Allin’s impact on structural engineering, seismology, and geophysics is immeasurable. He brought rigorous mathematical approaches for uncertainty assessment into all three fields. His seminal paper on “Engineering Seismic Risk Analysis”, published in 1968 in the Bulletin of the Seismological Society of America, is the foundation for modern seismic risk assessment methodologies known as Probabilistic Seismic Hazard Analysis. This work was the basis for the first seismic hazard map based on probability theory, published by the US Geological Survey in 1975. Today, Jim always forms the basis by which regulatory documents and building codes quantify structural loads due to earthquake shaking.

In addition to Allin’s well-known contribution of Probabilistic Seismic Hazard Analysis, he had an important but less quantifiable impact through his advocacy of probability as a decision-making tool. At the beginning of his career, earth scientists (and engineers to some extent) relied fully on deterministic models and resisted quantifying the uncertainty in their knowledge base. Allin instead advocated the use of Bayesian decision theory to quantify lack-of-knowledge uncertainty and make optimal decisions in the face of this uncertainty. When he advocated this approach in his 1971 book, it was a rare perspective. But thanks to Allin’s dedication, clarity of communication, and continued demonstration of the benefits, this perspective has become widely adopted in the fields of building code calibration, seismic hazard mapping, and recent performance-based engineering guidelines.

Allin’s pioneering work has been recognized through many awards and honors. In 1981 he was elected to the National Academy of Engineering at the age of 43. The Earthquake Engineering Research Institute has honored him as the 1999 EERI Distinguished Lecturer and has awarded him the Institute’s highest honor, the Houssner Medal, in 2003. The Seismological Society of America has given him its most prestigious award, the Harry Fielding Reed Medal, in 2001, and the American Society of Civil Engineers has awarded him the Huber Research Prize in 1971, the Moisseiff Award in 1977, the Norman Medal in 1983, and the Frederick Medal in 1988. He was the inaugural recipient of the International Civil Engineering Risk and Reliability Association’s CERRA Award in 1987. He is one of only a few engineers to be elected as a Fellow of the American Geophysical Union in 2002. These many honors from the diverse fields of engineering, earth science, and structural reliability indicate the depth and breadth of his brilliance.

The following quote, written more than ten years ago by Professor Haresh Shah who has worked most of his professional career in areas similar to those emphasized by Allin Cornell, highlights his unique place in the field: “Allin is by far the finest researcher in the field of probabilistic risk analysis in the world. He has been the intellectual leader of the structural reliability discipline since its early years. I cannot think of any other individual at the intellectual and visionary level in this field as Allin.”

The profession will remember Allin for his groundbreaking contributions and for his unique ability to combine brilliance in probability with sound engineering knowledge and judgment. His colleagues will remember Allin as a superb collaborator who was always willing to share his deep knowledge and insight. Allin was an intellectual, visionary, but Allin’s impact will be felt for a long time through his ideas and the many people he influenced.

In Memoriam

James M. Gere
1925-2008

With great sadness do we convey the news that Professor James M. Gere passed away after a long battle with cancer on January 30, 2008, at the age of 82.

Jim was born in Syracuse, NY on June 14, 1925. He enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps at age 17 in 1942, serving in England, France and Germany. In June 1946 he returned to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute on the G.I. Bill. On completing his B.C.E. degree in 1949 and his M.C.E. degree in 1951, he was awarded one of the first NSF Fellowships and chose to study at Stanford. He earned his Ph.D. in 1954 under the guidance of Stephen Timoshenko and was offered a faculty position in Civil Engineering. He was a member of the Stanford civil engineering faculty from 1954 to 1988.

During his tenure at Stanford and in his retirement Jim had an enormous impact on the life of his students and his colleagues with his superb teaching and mentoring, the many books he wrote, and the outstanding example he set in emphasizing and practicing positive professional and human values. He was universally respected and admired by students, faculty and staff at the university. Jim always felt that the opportunity to work with and be of service to young people was one of his greatest joys. He practiced this joy superbly while active on the faculty, and continued to be a most valuable member of the Stanford civil engineering community during his retirement when he gave freely of his time to advise students and to guide them on various field trips to the California earthquake country.

Jim was an avid hiker and runner and lover of nature. He regularly visited Yosemite and the Grand Canyon national parks. He made over 20 ascents of the Half Dome in Yosemite as well as “John Muir hikes” of up to 50 miles in a day. In 1980 he hiked to the base camp of Mount Everest, saving the life of a companion on the trip. Jim was a dedicated runner and completed the Boston Marathon at age 48, in a time of 3:13.

On a personal note, there will never be a better and wiser colleague than Jim Gere. He was a father figure to all of us who joined the faculty between 1954 and 1968. He mentored and advised us by example and with unselfishness and kindness. Jim always addressed the说完 even the most precarious situation. He was the steady support who held us together and made us work as a team. His cheerful personality and wonderful smile will be forever present in our minds and hearts. He was a true gentleman and he was just the nicest person, much respected by all. How fortunate we all are that Jim touched us by being part of our lives and careers. We will miss Jim enormously.

Jim is survived by his wife of 61 years, Janice; daughter Susan, sons William and David, grandchildren Clifford and Rachelle Gere of Hollister and Dewitt Durham of Palo Alto, and brothers Frederick of Roseville, CA and William of Cheshire, CT.