

Richard L. Coons, a geophysical expert on seismic velocities, the presalt section of the South Atlantic, and fault shadows on the Texas shelf, died 22 December 2016 at the age of 78 from complications associated with Parkinson's disease.

Dick received a BS in geology and mathematics from the University of Wisconsin in 1960 and a PhD in geophysics from the same institution in 1964. He was an advisor on marine geophysics and computer systems to the U.S. Navy from 1962 to 1968; associate editor for the Institute of Geophysics in Trieste, Italy, from 1968 to 1973; president of the English School Community of Luanda, Angola (ESCOLA), from 1970 to 1973; and general chairman of the 3rd Annual Gulf Coast Exploration and Development Meeting and Exposition in April 1987.

Dick's publications included his 296-page dissertation *Precambrian basement geology and Paleozoic structure of the mid-continent gravity high* (1964); "Least square polynomial fitting of gravity data and case histories," Proceedings of the 3rd Annual Conference on Computers in the Mineral Industry (1963); "Regional gravity analysis of the mid-continent gravity high," AAPG (1964); "Velocity analysis and depth conversion via PC," 3rd Annual Gulf Coast Exploration and Development Meeting and Exposition (April 1967); "Exploration below salt — A lot of noise," 6th Annual Gulf Coast Exploration and Development Meeting and Exposition (April 1990); and "Exploration below gas — Charged low velocity zones," 6th Annual Gulf Coast Exploration and Development Meeting and Exposition (April 1990).

Dick started working in the oil and gas industry at Gulf Research and Development in Harmarville, Pennsylvania, and was the supervisor of potential methods from June 1964 to March 1968. His career at Gulf Oil took him to Copenhagen, Denmark, (March to September 1968) before returning to the research lab

(September 1968 to June 1969). He served as chief geophysicist for Gulf Oil Company North Sea (June 1969 to January 1970) and chief geophysicist for Cabinda Gulf Oil in Luanda (January 1970 to June 1973) before another trip to the research lab (June 1973 to October 1976). During his career, he was also manager of Gulf Oil Geoscience West Coast in Bakersfield (October 1976 to June 1979), and manager of technology at Gulf's Southwest District in Midland (June 1979 to August 1979). Dick was also the exploration manager for Argo Petroleum Corporation in Los Angeles (August 1980 to February 1982) and Texas regional manager/VP with Forest Oil in Corpus Christi and Midland (February 1982 to July 1987) before starting his consulting company, Resource Technologies, in Houston, Texas, in 1987. Dick pursued resource evaluation incorporating depth imaging and integration until Parkinson's slowed him down too much in about 2010.

Dick's work in Cabinda led to major field discoveries, which have produced over a billion barrels of oil. Resource Technologies was ahead of its time, providing velocity analysis and depth imaging services to oil companies throughout the world, specializing in evaluation of gas chimneys, fault shadows, channels, and other situations where low-velocity lens cause depth highs to be time lows and thus not recognized for their true exploration value. Dick was also one of the first geophysicists to show how time highs can be caused by one-way or two-way traveltimes through salt lenses, which produces time pull-ups and pseudo faults, which do not represent actual subsalt structure.

Dick was a rare individual, knowing both geology and geophysics. More than that, he was a very joyful person that we all loved to work with — very diligent, precise, and an excellent mentor.

— H. ROICE NELSON, JR. AND DAVID KESSLER