

LAURENCE L. SMITH
1896-1985

Laurence L. (Larry) Smith, former State Geologist of South Carolina, died November 26, 1985, at his home in Columbia, South Carolina. He is survived by his wife, Louise, of 2849 Sheffield Road, in Columbia.

Larry Smith was born in Delaware, New Jersey, in 1896. He earned his bachelor's degree in 1919 and his master's degree in 1920, both in geology and at Lafayette College, and his doctorate at Johns Hopkins University in 1924. He taught at Lafayette from 1920 until 1922, and then he came to the University of South Carolina where he stayed until he retired. During those forty years, nearly all students who took freshman geology at USC had "Rock" Smith. He was especially proud of the fact that after his first year on the job, he never missed giving another lecture for thirty-nine years. Meanwhile, he did consulting work in economic geology, and assisted the Federal Government during World War II in the exploration for economic mineral deposits throughout the Southeast.

In 1947 Dr. Smith succeeded Dr. Stephen Taber, the man who hired him, as chairman of the Geology Department, and as State Geologist. Despite the additional duties these positions required, Dr. Smith kept his former tasks and his main interests continued to be teaching freshman geology and curating the geology museum.

Dr. Smith's research and publications tended to be on practical aspects of geology. He found answers to questions asked by the general public and by students and visitors to the geology museum. He described how iron concentrations are formed on objects. Such objects are the most common of materials brought to the geology gallery for identification. He explained how pits form on granite surfaces, such as Forty-Acre Rock (a public preserve in northeastern South Carolina). He researched the history of geology teaching techniques, 1817-1912, and he collected all the available history of the geology museum in his pamphlet, "A Treasured Collection." He delighted in putting modern perplexities in a historical perspective, as in his publication of an old 1869 geologic examination prepared by Joseph LeConte, so that modern students could see that geologic tests always had been difficult.

Laurence L. Smith was listed in *Who's Who in America*. He was a Fellow of the Geological Society of America and of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; and a member of the Society of Economic Geologists and the Carolina Geological Society. Dr. Smith's activities were so widespread that when he retired he was known by nearly every person active in geology in the Southeast. Even as he was retiring, he thought to further benefit the State of South Carolina by requesting that the office of State Geologist in which he had served without pay be transferred to the South Carolina State Development Board. With the State Geologist being organic to their Division of Geology, more geologic work could be done than a department chairman could achieve in his spare time and summers. His request was honored in 1963 by then-Governor Ernest Hollings, and Henry S. Johnson, Jr., Chief of the Division of Geology, became State Geologist. Honored in 1964 by Professor Emeritus, L. L. Smith continued to be active in the

concerns of the Geology Museum for several years until his failing health forced him to slow down. On April 20, 1973, the USC Geology Museum was dedicated to Dr. Smith and renamed the L. L. Smith Geology Museum. A few years later, following the relocation of that museum to larger quarters, "Rock" Smith still continued to make periodic visits and was generous with his time and knowledge to succeeding curators.

Norman K. Olson
State Geologist
South Carolina

Karin L. Willoughby
Curator
L. L. Smith Geology Museum