



## IN MEMORIAM

Mark N. Christensen  
Professor of Energy and Resources, Emeritus, Berkeley  
Chancellor, Santa Cruz  
1930– 2003

Mark N. Christensen, a central figure in the founding and development of the Energy and Resources Group at the University of California, Berkeley, died of cancer at his home in Carmel, California, on October 2, 2003.

Mark was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin, on July 16, 1930. He combined his love for natural beauty and for learning by attending the University of Alaska. At the age of 20 with three other students, he participated in the second ascent of Mt. Logan, Canada's highest peak. Living in the beauty of nature, depending on climbing buddies, and surviving on the margin marked his attitude toward life thereafter. He earned his B.S. in geology in 1952.

Christensen came to UC Berkeley in 1954 for graduate study in geology with Professor Charles Gilbert, whose fame spanned the fields of volcanism, ore deposits, stratigraphy, and sedimentary petrography. Like his mentor who went by "Gil," Christensen soon became known as "Chris." He undertook research on the geologic structure of the Mineral King area of California, completing his Ph.D. in 1959. His dissertation was published by the University of California Press in 1963.

On graduating in 1959, Chris joined the faculty of Berkeley's Department of Geology and continued to study the Sierra Nevada, Mono Basin, the coastal ranges of California and, following the major earthquake of 1964, Alaska. He earned the campus Distinguished Teaching Award in 1962, the year in which he also coauthored with Gilbert a Physical Geology Laboratory Manual. It remained in print for a quarter century. His career as a geologist, however, was prematurely cut short by the call of service to the university.

While still an associate professor, Chris's campus leadership took him to the position of chair of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate in 1970. Chris was a popular chair who had the reputation of running meetings and Division affairs affably, with grace, and fairly. He was especially skillful in helping contending sides to reach consensus on difficult issues. His tenure as Division chair was cut short, however, when the incoming chancellor, Albert Bowker, chose him to be the vice chancellor at Berkeley. In this role, Chris concentrated his attention on curriculum innovation and reform and worked closely with key Academic Senate committees to these ends. One of the most famous innovations was the establishment of a faculty position within the Energy and Resources Group (ERG). He also supervised the preparation of a complicated faculty affirmative action program demanded by new federal regulations. Chris stayed in his job as the vice chancellor for three years until appointed as the second chancellor of the Santa Cruz campus. After a relatively short stay, however, he realized that guiding an interesting campus with what had been a very personalized management system under his predecessor, the founding chancellor who was still on campus, was not his "cup of tea."

Christensen returned to Berkeley in 1976, moving his professorship to the Energy and Resources Group, further expanding its small internal faculty. ERG was the ideal intellectual home for a scholar who enjoyed connecting disciplinary perspectives into a bigger picture. Chris co- taught the program's flagship course ER100/200, Energy and Society, emphasizing the behavioral, social, and institutional factors as well as frameworks for understanding their interaction with energy and the environment. In ERG, Chris focused on students, serving on numerous Ph.D. oral exams and dissertation committees as well as on the Academic Senate's Committee on Special Scholarships. He served ERG tirelessly in many administrative capacities and on committees in search of new chairs and faculty. He was the primary research advisor for numerous ERG master's students while also remaining very active as an advisor in the undergraduate Environmental Sciences major. He served tirelessly in many administrative capacities and on committees in search of new chairs and faculty.

As professor and teacher in ERG, Chris was a complex thinker, bringing together equal parts natural science, social science, philosophy, and vision. At times, especially in large lecture courses, his arguments were difficult to follow, characterized by what might be called a certain degree of "nonlinearity." The large lecture format was too limiting for the way he thought about issues. On a one- to- one basis in his office, or in a small group gathered around a table in T-4, Chris was a polymath and truly amazing. He encouraged ERG students to resist the "technical fix" and to think politically. He challenged the conventional wisdom. He reasoned in an organic fashion, drawing on his experience, his broad and ecumenical reading, and the myriad of conversations, discussions, and experiences he had in Alaska, Greece, and so many other places. His mark on ERG and its students was an enduring one, even for those who did not know him.

Combining research and public service, Chris engaged in energy forums and policy discussions, at times under the auspices of the U.S. Information Service, in Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Norway, Romania, Syria, and Yugoslavia. Concerned with security, sovereignty, and the environment, Chris emphasized soft energy paths, contributing to a broader understanding of the potential for energy conservation and distributed renewable energy systems. His work frequently led to repeat engagements and participation at higher levels of policy debate. For example, at the invitation of several Hopi leaders, he provided them with an assessment of their energy options that led to further service on the Advisory Board of the Hopi Foundation. One of his last gestures to the campus was chairing the Reactor Hazards Committee in the latter 1980s during the decommissioning of the reactor in Etcheverry Hall.

Chris retired in 1994 and moved to Carmel where he continued to engage in environmental issues. He led the formation and served as the first chair of the Carmel River Watershed Council/ Conservancy, a forum for property owners, environmental advocates, and other interests concerned with water quality and riparian management of the Carmel River, as well as research and public education.

Professor Christensen is survived by his wife, Regine Godfrey of Carmel, two children, Abe Christensen of Berkeley and Karen Christensen- Jones of Felton, California, and one grandson.

Richard B. Norgaard  
I. Michael Heyman  
Ronnie Lipschutz