

Eugene Derenyi was one of the original group of pioneering faculty in the Department of Surveying Engineering at the University of New Brunswick, arriving in Fredericton in the early 1960s. He came to UNB as a grad student (receiving the first doctorate in the department) and retired as a Full Professor in the mid 1990s. Subsequently he continued to serve as a very active and productive Honorary Research Professor until the end of the decade.

Professor Derenyi was a core member of a group of young faculty, mostly from Central and Eastern Europe, who built the Surveying Engineering programme into the top-ranked department in the field globally.

The Department came of age in an era when computers, satellite remote sensing, global positioning, and related technologies fundamentally transformed the nature and relevance of the surveying and mapping field. UNB Surveying Engineering was not only involved from the outset in the development of these technologies, starting with its pioneering contribution to the mapping of the moon in advance of the Lunar landings, but it also played a key role in using these technologies in support of reforming land administration systems (both at home and around the world), in supporting modern resource management and infrastructure development, in the mapping of the oceans and a host of other related activities.

From its origins in 1960, the Department recruited a group of world class scholars, both scientists and engineers, from around the world who provided the intellectual, professional and entrepreneurial drive which set it on the path to becoming the best in the world.

Eugene Derenyi was one of those scholars.

His specialty was satellite remote sensing – a subject that came into its own in the post war era during the first great wave of space exploration. Dr. Derenyi made seminal contributions to the field, especially in the area of analytical remote sensing.

Dr. Derenyi's research was of the highest international standard. He made significant contributions to both the applied science and professional dimensions of the discipline, mentored two generations of graduate students who went on to become leaders in their own right, and applied his research findings to major mapping programs across Canada and internationally.

At the same time, Professor Derenyi carried a full and demanding teaching load. Especially in the Department's early years, the curriculum and course content (at both the undergrad and graduate level) was brand new – reporting and analyzing in the classroom almost immediately the results coming out of an international network of research laboratories. There were few, if any, textbooks available and an inordinate amount of work was devoted to developing course materials. In this regard the Department developed an extensive Lecture Notes publication series which was used around the world, and to which Dr. Derenyi made significant contributions.

I was both a student and colleague of Eugene's. From an undergrad's perspective (having taken courses from him between 1967 and 1969) I can attest that Professor Derenyi cared deeply about his discipline and about his students, and that his courses were rigorous, current and terribly important.

I had the privilege of staying in touch with Eugene in the years after he retired and very much enjoyed our conversations. He was always thoughtful, positive (no matter what the challenges), and thoroughly engaging. He cared deeply about his profession, the Department, and especially his family.

Our thoughts are with his family at this very difficult time.

John McLaughlin
President and Professor Emeritus
University of New Brunswick