

Roads, John Owen

January 20, 1950 – June 21, 2008

John Owen Roads, a Research Professor at the UCSD Scripps Institute of Oceanography, died Saturday June 21, 2008 following a two-year battle with leukemia. He was 58 years old. He fought for life and died a noble and distinguished man. He joins his beloved son Garrett in Heaven and remains his daughter's hero.



Roads was born in Boulder, CO and grew up in Lafayette, CO. He graduated from the University of Colorado with honors, after which he earned his Ph.D. in Meteorology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1977. After moving to San Diego to work at Scripps, he married Lori Henderson and they had two children, Emily and Garrett. He was a proud and loving father. He recently married Elena Orlova.

Roads began working at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography in 1977, where he was known by his colleagues as an extraordinarily dedicated scientist. He was an active member of the university during his 31-year tenure, serving as the director of the Experimental Climate Prediction Center since 1986. He also served as associate director of the Climate Research Division for 5 years, and sat on numerous national and international committees. Roads was an excellent and prolific writer, producing more than 140 refereed papers over the span of his career. This astonishing level of productivity distinguishes him amongst his peers. Roads also mentored 3 Ph.D. students and several Master's students who graduated under his supervision. Roads had a passion for his work and loved to be with students, even working with them in his final weeks from his hospital bed.

However, Roads's devotion to work never interfered with his many interests in life. He loved the music of Roy Orbison, traveling, driving his Mustang convertible, living in Pacific Beach, morning jogs, Mexico, frozen cheeseburgers, white butterflies, visiting San Luis Obispo, wine, the Sweeneys, tennis, mentoring, action movies, and skiing, but he especially enjoyed reading. There was always a book in his suitcase along with his beloved MacBook. He was never at a loss for interesting topics of discussion, and his conversation was always enlivened by his uniquely quirky sense of humor. He will be remembered for his cheerful personality by those who were fortunate enough to know him.

Roads, a devoted and loving husband and father, is survived by his daughter Emily, Emily's mother Lori, wife Elena Orlova, stepdaughter Katherine, parents Grace and Paul, and siblings Paul Jr., Nancy, Cynthia, Marilyn, and Carol. He will be missed by his many friends and colleagues.

Services will be held at the Church at Rancho Bernardo, 11740 Bernardo Plaza Court, San Diego, CA, 92128, T: 858 592 2434 at 11:00 a.m. Friday June 27. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to a trust fund established in Roads's name, which will enable SIO graduate students to attend climate science conferences. Contact family for details at emilyroads@mac.com.