

John Ramage



We are sad to announce that John Ramage passed away on December 30, 2025. John was born in Wellington, New Zealand. He earned his B.S. Degree in Civil Engineering at Washington State University in 1970 and his M.S.C. Degree at the University of Illinois in 1971.

John joined CH2M HILL (PDX) in June 1969 as a Junior Engineer and went to serve the firm as a geotechnical engineer and senior program manager. John worked for CH2M HILL for 42 years, ending with his London assignment on the project to clean up the Thames, facing a mandate from the EU. After returning to the U.S. in the fall of 2011, John continued to work on a part-time basis, conducting reviews and providing advice and guidance. As always, he put together a talented and hardworking team before leaving London, finally retiring in 2012.

The following are tributes from numerous friends offering their memories of John.

I remember my interactions with John very well. He was a consummate professional, and the firm chose wisely when he was sent to Milwaukee for the Milwaukee Water Pollution Abatement Program (MWPAP), our first multi-billion-dollar program management project. I traveled there regularly in the early years to support John in my role as a discipline group director for construction management. – **Mike Morrison**

Sad news indeed. I have much respect for John and many fond memories of our time together in Milwaukee, and throughout his career. Rest in peace, John. - **Steve Wanders**

Very sad news that John Ramage passed away. He was an amazing guy. He was an inspiration to work with. Great capabilities and great passion. – **Ray Topping**

At the time John accepted the Port Arthur program, it was the largest private sector remediation project the company had done. It desperately needed leadership. John stepped in, and it helped that the client changed leadership too. John's ability to lead through sticky issues and a very particular client with a huge environmental liability was masterful. One thing that helped was John knew everybody and was able to get some very good people, including

John Echternach, to move to a place not many would have chosen for a multi-year stint.

He was a firm but calm leader who balanced the client, our team, and the company needs while having another company as a partner. To show John's dedication, he told me his wife had never seen him without a beard. A requirement to work on that was no beards so that you could wear respirator masks. John shaved. – **Stephen Gelman**

Great times at Port Arthur, then the Chevron Texaco merger and the end of wanting to proactively remediate the waste. John, along with Tom Mann and others, helped to create the Port Arthur Remediation Team concept. It was the best assignment I ever had.

I remember being summoned to Port Arthur by Tom. He pointedly stated “put up or shut up” of me in his office. I and several others taught the Project Delivery training system to them about 9 months prior. So, his statement was “could I do it or just talk about it.” That commenced a 5-year assignment there, initially with John as our team leader. His model of being able to hold competing interests together without anger was a sight to behold. It reflected Ralph Peterson's admonishment of “what about being loud makes your argument more valid?” I went back to Seattle and asked my wife, Jean Ann, “How would you like to live in Beaumont, Texas?” What an adventure – **John Echternach**

I was greatly saddened by the news of John's passing. Though we lost contact for a time, we reconnected about 5 years ago. It was pleasing to learn that he and Eleanor were enjoying their retirement on the Washington coast. Reflecting, John was a great friend, valued colleague, and strong mentor. It seems like only a few days ago – not a half-century – I arrived at the CH2M HILL Portland office, eager to start my career in geotechnical engineering. On one of my first assignments, I made a rookie mistake that I feared would doom my budding career. With great patience, John suggested that we look at the problem another way. Using his approach, we arrived at the same answer; but unlike me, John had created a paper trail beyond dispute. That began a friendship and working partnership until our many moves with the company put a great deal of distance between us.

John stood as my best man when I married Gail, a testament to the high regard I held for him. John was an excellent civil engineer, as demonstrated by his many career accomplishments. He was also a great leader, with a keen mind and high regard for those around him. Those of us who worked

under and beside him knew he possessed integrity, professionalism, patience, and strong people skills. Though he had a great intellect, he also had a strong sense of humor, was fun to be around, and always wore a broad smile. He will be missed. – **Larry Roth**

What can I say about John Ramage? Three important memories come to mind:

John took over as Geotechnical Discipline Director when – far too young – Ed Worth passed away. John continued Ed’s vision to provide geotechnical support throughout the firm, growing the staff, generally starting them off in CVO, PDX, SEA, or RDD to “learn the ropes” of how we worked at CH2M HILL, then transferring them where needed.

John radiated positive energy wherever he went. He gave me the confidence to step up to become a department manager, project manager, and eventually a district discipline director. Moreover, he gave me the confidence to participate in client sales presentations, a role I came to enjoy more and more as my career progressed. I owe him thanks for the confidence he gave me for all these roles – without John’s encouragement, I don’t believe that I would ever have done these things.

When I first became a hiring manager, John taught me a critical lesson that I have not forgotten to this day. Let me paraphrase: “Always hire people that will challenge you: People that will continually ‘nip at your heels.’ This will drive you to be the best you can be. Never hire people that will just put in a routine day’s work and not push you to be your very best every single day. In this way, we will constantly get better at our collective jobs. If we hire people who do not challenge us constantly, we as a firm will atrophy.” I have never forgotten this lesson and have, in fact, shared it with other managers in a variety of industries that I have met since I retired.

One more thing I learned from John was to appreciate good wine and fine food.

Thanks for everything, John. You were a hell of an inspiration. – **Jim Schneider**

Out of respect for John’s wishes, there will be no obituary or service.