

**Lawrence W. Fritz**

Former President, ISPRS (1996-2000)

'I SOUGHT TO MAKE ISPRS A LEGAL ENTITY'

ISPRS has had a profound and positive impact on my personal life and professional career. Having a national and international forum for presenting, discussing and networking with peers stimulates ingenuity and advancements which support and sustain the profession. My early professional career was photogrammetric research and development at the US Coast & Geodetic Survey (USC&GS), developing systems for calibration of precision photogrammetric instrument systems and cameras. It was at USC&GS that I worked under the guidance of Charlie Theurer, Helmut Schmidt, Carper Tewinkel and Chet Slama, who all encouraged me to present papers on results of my R&D and participate in ASPRS technical and publication committees and in ISP. Although I had attended ISP workshops and symposia as early as 1967 and was a member of the 1968-72 working group (WG) on optical transfer function, my first full participation was at the 1972 Ottawa Congress where I presented a paper. After this Congress, I became an active member of the ISP WGs: WG I/1 on image geometry and WGs II/1 and WG II/2 on analytical instrumentation and analogue-type instrumentation. Before the 1976 ISPRS Helsinki Congress the ASPRS appointed me as USA national correspondent to ISP Commission II and I served in that position through the 1980 Hamburg and 1984 Rio de Janeiro Congresses.

During the 1976-80 ISP term, I continued as an active member of WG I/1 on image geometry. My NOSAP development led me to serve as a member of WG II/1 on "a system for evaluation of analytical plotters" and in April 1980 to serve as director of the Analytical Plotter Symposium & Workshop in which eight manufacturers introduced their

analytical plotter systems. At the Hamburg Congress Dr. Jarko Jaksic of National Research Council, Canada was elected President of Commission II. During the 1970s, I had significant calibration- and instrument-related collaborations with NRC and it was always a pleasure to work with Jarko who often served as my mentor. He selected me to serve as chairman of WG II/1 on "analytical and hybrid photogrammetric instruments" during 1980-84.

My professional career changed with the election of Ronald Reagan as President of the US when I was selected to serve as senior policy analyst in the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) on the White House staff. OSTP was a small staff of less than 20 individuals responsible for developing the entire national S&T policy for the US. My subsequent positions in US government included serving as chief of the photogrammetry division of the National Ocean Service and as director of the NOAA Charting R&D Laboratory for managing R&D in hydrography, photogrammetry, cartography and special programs.

This change was complementary to my ISPRS career. At the Rio de Janeiro Congress the General Assembly elected the US to manage Commission II on "instrumentation for data reduction and analyses" for the term 1984-88 with me as commission president.

At the 1988 Kyoto Congress I presented the bid for the US (for the 2nd time) to host the 1992 Congress in Washington, DC. In Rio de Janeiro my presentation for the US to host the Congress in Baltimore did not succeed primarily due to the excellent presentation by Shunji Murai for Japan. Immediately before departing to Kyoto, I retired from my government job. Three weeks later, I came back

from Japan and started in my new position in the private sector as senior staff engineer for General Electric Aerospace. The two-week Washington Congress was successful.

My initial intentions did not include an ambition to continue on Council. However, the Congress director position requires a tremendous amount of communication. This experience, coupled with encouragement of my Council colleagues, convinced me that I should carry on as secretary general. I was now hooked on the scope and the challenges facing the Society and sincerely felt that I could help bring ISPRS to the role it deserves in the global scene. Shunji Murai and I initiated ISPRS Highlights to communicate the message, revitalised interactions with the United Nations and other intergovernmental organisations, expanded regional membership and introduced associate membership.

I was elected president at the 1996 Vienna Congress. Being the only president from the private sector in modern times and recognising the enormous potential of ISPRS and the leading roles it could, and should, take, I sought to make ISPRS into a formal entity to protect its valuable heritage and assets. I initiated steps to make ISPRS a formal legal entity, a status it lost during the World War II years. The Society and I were fortunate to have perspectives from all six continents represented on the Council – 1st VP Murai from Asia, 2nd VP Marcio Barbosa from South America, Secretary General Trinder from Australia, Treasurer Heinz Ruether from Africa, Congress Director Klaas Jan Beek from Europe, and me from North America. Together we objectively assessed the state and structure of the Society, solicited ideas and constructive support of leading ISPRS colleagues and developed “A Strategic Plan for the 21st Century.” This plan not only redefined the objectives and goals of the Society but set forth specific actions to ensure its implementation. As a result, a few of the noteworthy changes are: ISPRS has been registered as a legal entity; the Society has instantiated spatial information science and has significantly restructured and clarified the domains of its commissions; it manages its programs with support from an international policy advisory committee and international science advisory committee; it maintains an Orange Book and a Green Book to ensure smooth transitions between terms of office; and the ISPRS Foundation has been established. Once again I express my appreciation to my Council colleagues for their strong efforts to produce this



ISPRS Council from 1996-2000. In the back row (from left to right) are Heinz Ruther (Treasurer), John Trinder (Secretary General) and Klaas-Jan Beek (Congress Director). In the front row (left to right) are Shunji Murai (1st Vice President) Lawrence Fritz (President) and Marcio Barbosa (2nd Vice President).

strategic plan. ISPRS has provided me a life of friendships and cooperative endeavours with innumerable peers in this great profession.

There are too many people who have helped me in my professional and Society career to list here, but I express my heartfelt appreciation to all of them. John Trinder and I continue to this day to work together in managing The ISPRS Foundation (TIF). TIF is a philanthropic effort of ISPRS to recognise and enable the deserving, especially our colleagues from developing countries and emerging markets, to participate and contribute to advancing the ISPRS sciences and technologies. We established TIF as an independent entity to enable systematic grants to be issued by ISPRS without detracting from the administrative dues and tasks of running the Society. It needs the support of all who wish to give back for the benefits that they have received for participating in ISPRS and its constituent professions.

As ISPRS culminates the completion of its first 100 years, we can all look back at its many achievements of the past and its bright future to serve as a collegial organisation for voluntary sharing and promoting technical and scientific ideas and advancements for the good of all humanity. It has been a pleasure for me to participate in its growth and success. ■