

A lighthouse has gone out



Olav Torgeir Blindheim passed away on the 23rd of September 2005, a cancer disease had fought down a giant - in dual sense - of the Norwegian and international tunnelling community. He had just rounded 61.

The start of his professional career was with Department of Geology at the Norwegian Institute of Technology in Trondheim in 1968, where he is remembered as a most inspiring teacher and an outstanding researcher within rock mechanics. The "NTH-model" is still recognized worldwide as a very useful tool for TBM performance prognosis. This work led to a doctorate and a rewarding stay at Colorado School of Mines in the late 1970'ies.

In 1982, after a period as manager of the department and having qualified as full professor, dr. Blindheim was head hunted into private business as a consultant, from 1985 with his own company. It soon became a renown entity under the motto: "Quality: Gives more – requires more", a symbol for the man as

well. He rightfully obtained confidence by the clients that wanted to develop new projects within underground engineering, like oil and gas storages and sub sea road tunnels. They did meet, in the same individual, a curious, respectful, optimistic and result oriented advisor. And he trusted and gave advice to younger colleagues in a way which made them all grow. He was for a long period assigned to the Client at Saudi Arabia's strategic oil storage project. There his ability to enter into complex problems, his stamina and devotion and his professional integrity paid off substantially as a force in decision making.

In later years, as an independent advisor, dr. Blindheim took part in challenging projects around the world, like in Peoples Republic of China (where the photo was shot last year). His outstanding abilities and the strong demands he put upon himself and the quality of his work were largely appreciated by all with whom he did co-operate. In 2004 he was awarded Gullfeiselen ("The Golden Mash Hammer") by ITA of Norway. Dr. Blindheim would have had so much more to give, but we comfort ourselves with the fact that he did accomplish a lot and that a lot of his knowledge and experience has been published. During his difficult illness period, he expressed content with his achievements and he gradually began to grasp the large and positive influence which will prevail on underground engineering and on all who had the pleasure to work with him.

The same qualities and capacities for which he was admired in his professional work, he generously yielded upon his family, his friends, boy scouts and numerous private projects. He gave time and devotion to maintain friendship with a lot of people without regard to position, rank or personal profit. We are many who feel proud and enriched by having known Torgeir, and he will be profoundly missed.

On behalf of friends and colleagues in the tunnelling society we extend our warm sympathy to his family, his pride in life; and we will always honour his memory.

Anders Beitnes, Bjørn Nilsen and Bent Aagaard