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From the Desk of Dr. Shamim Pakzad  
Chair of Civil and Environmental Engineering

To Colleagues, Students, Alumni, and the Family of Dr. Bob Sorensen,

The faculty and staff of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering note the passing of Dr. Robert (Bob) Sorensen on December 30, 2025. Bob earned his BS in Civil Engineering at the Newark College of Engineering (now the New Jersey Institute of Technology), his MS degree from Lehigh University, and his PhD from the University of California, Berkeley. After brief teaching appointments at Valparaiso University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and Texas A&M University, he worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at the Coastal Engineering Research Center (CERC) in Fort Belvoir, Virginia, from 1973 to 1982. At CERC, he rose to the position of Head of the Coastal Processes and Structures Branch.

In 1982, Bob came to Lehigh University as a Full Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering. He was a respected scholar and colleague whose work and presence left a lasting mark on the department and the field of coastal engineering. He was also a beloved teacher and mentor who impacted the lives and careers of many students at Lehigh. His academic and professional accomplishments included numerous publications in coastal engineering, including textbooks on coastal engineering and wave mechanics. He also served as a consultant on projects in many parts of the world, including work related to protecting the City of Venice from tidal inundation. One of his publications was an early paper addressing the problem of sea level rise and strategies for protection against it. Another notable publication of Bob's was among the first on stepped spillways. Bob was active on campus, particularly on curriculum committees within the Department and the College. Off campus, he was active in several coastal engineering societies and beach preservation associations.

Bob leaves behind his wife Rita, a daughter, three sons, and three grandchildren. The department remembers him with gratitude for his contributions to scholarship, teaching, and service.

We move that this memorial resolution be made a permanent part of the faculty record by being included in the minutes of this meeting.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department,

Rick Weisman and Jerry Lennon, Emeriti Professors