



South African National  
Committee on Tunnelling

## Obituaries

### David Lawrence 1948–2015

There are few who live life to the full in their work as well as their private lives. One such person was David Lawrence. David managed to fulfill a career in engineering that contributed to the civil development of major mining projects in his home country, South Africa, as well as several landmark infrastructure projects, including the Drakensburg Pumped Storage Scheme, where his connection with the international tunnelling fraternity began.

David died peacefully on 7 July 2015 at his adopted home on the Isle of Man in the UK, where he moved with his family in the 1990s.

Throughout his career, David was engaged on many important infrastructure engineering assignments. In South Africa, and as a director of the underground construction engineering company Basil Read, he worked on many mine development projects as well as underground civil infrastructure projects.

In the UK, David was engaged in the early stages of the geological investigation shaft for the planned nuclear waste repository facility in Cumbria, before the government of the day cancelled the project.

Following that, he joined the Kellogg Brown & Root team that managed the Dublin Port highway tunnel in Ireland – a project that was technically demanding and politically challenging. The project was completed, and Dublin is a changed city today due to the port's heavy freight traffic being able to bypass the city centre to the national highway connections.

With close-out of the Dublin Port tunnel project, David retired to the Isle of Man, but he continued to be associated with the tunnelling industry as an independent consultant and worked with the LBA (London Bridge Association) consulting construction firm in the UK as a contracts advisor.

In South Africa, through his association with the construction phase of the Drakensburg Pumped Storage Scheme, David worked with expatriate engineers from many parts of the world, including Terry Mellors, Martin Knights, and John Sharp of the UK.

David had a truly international and interesting engineering career. He counted among his most interesting projects the legendary Med-Dead Sea tunnel that was proposed to convey water by gravity across Israel from the the Mediterranean Sea to the lower lever of the Dead Sea to replenish the depleting water resource of the Dead Sea while generating hydro power. Ironically regional civil unrest and threatened factional violence that killed off the project in the 1980s when David was already in the Middle East and working on the actual start of construction. A revival of the project could well contribute towards reconciliation and reasonable negotiation of peace in this fractious and unstable part of the world.

David was an engineer and professional in the international tunnelling business who was determined to present opportunities to others to be part of the real and exciting possibilities of the underground space and tunnelling industry. He was instrumental in advancing and developing the careers of many in the business.

His adventurous and committed, yet fun-loving approach to a professional career was a significant element of his success and the esteem that so many hold for him. He will be missed.



Dave Lawrence at the BTS  
Dinner in May 2015

*H.J. Tluczek*



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## Obituaries *(continued)*

### James McKelvey 1954–2015

James McKelvey, a respected and internationally-recognized tunnel design, construction, and risk management expert, passed away suddenly on 20 July 2015, at the age of 60.

Born in South Africa on 15 September 1954, Jim earned his bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Natal in 1976, and that same year, joined Murray & Roberts Roads and Earthworks and began work on what would become numerous South African tunnelling projects.

Jim joined Keeve Steyn Incorporated in 1980, and during his more than 20-year career with the company, he became recognized as one of the foremost tunnelling engineers in South Africa. He led the company's tunnelling team on many major projects, such as the Inanda-Wiggins Tunnels and the Midmar Potable Water Tunnel. In 1998, he took up the position of Chief Resident Engineer on the Matsoku Weir and Diversion Tunnel, followed by the same role on the 32-kilometer Mohale Tunnel. Both projects are part of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, one of the largest water transfer programmes ever developed in Africa and recognized by the South African Institution of Civil Engineering as the Project of the Century.

Jim moved to the United States in the early 2000s and joined Black & Veatch in 2002 as a senior member of the company's geo-engineering group. In 2003, he moved to Charleston, South Carolina, to lend his talents to a multi-phased wastewater tunnel replacement programme. An Associate Vice President at Black & Veatch, he later began the company's Tunnelling Center of Excellence in Indianapolis before taking on the role of Tunnel Chief Engineer in 2013. During his 13-year career at Black & Veatch, Jim was engaged on many of the company's large-diameter tunnel and pipeline projects throughout North America.

Jim has left a lasting legacy by mentoring many professionals along the way, and he has also left an indelible mark on the industry as a tunnelling authority known for his practical, insightful solutions to complex design and construction challenges. He served on both the Executive Council and the Organizing Committee of the International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association (ITA), and he represented Black & Veatch as a sustaining member of the Underground Construction Association (UCA) of the Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration (SME). Within the UCA, he served as a member of the George A. Fox Organizing Committee. He was also a member of the Organizing Committee for the ITA-AITES World Tunnelling Conference 2016, to be held in San Francisco. He also formerly served as a member of the ITA working group on shotcrete, a tutor in the ITA working group on contractual practice, Chair of the South African National Committee on Tunnelling (SANCOT) and of SANCOT's working group on shotcrete. He chaired the organizing committee for the memorable ITA-AITES World Tunneling Conference 2000, which was held in Durban, South Africa. He authored numerous papers and chapters of books, including a logistics chapter in *Megaprojects: Challenges and Recommended Practices*.

Jim is survived by Jacqui, his wife of 12 years; children (and their spouses) Bianca and Greg, Monique and Kevin, Katherine and Mitch, Stuart and Andrea, and Ross; grandchildren Cameron and Jude; and a sister, Dianne.



James McKelvey - 1954-2015

*H.J. Tluczek*