

*At a meeting of the FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES on December 3, 2019,
the following tribute to the life and service of the late Peter Rogers
was spread upon the permanent records of the Faculty.*

PETER ROGERS

BORN: April 30, 1937
DIED: February 8, 2018

Peter Rogers was born April 30, 1937, in Liverpool, England, the eighth of nine children. From an early age, he was motivated by the challenge to apply science to address societally important problems. He received a bachelor's degree with honors in engineering from Liverpool University in 1958 and a master of science degree from Northwestern University in 1961. He joined the celebrated Harvard Water Program in 1961, earning the Ph.D. in 1966.

The Harvard Water Program involved a unique interdisciplinary collaboration established initially in the Department of Government but administered jointly by what is now the School of Engineering and Applied Science (SEAS) and the Department of Economics. Rogers was mentored in his early career by Professors Harold Thomas, Jr., and Myron Fiering in SEAS, Professor Arthur Maass in the Department of Government, and Professor Robert Dorfman in the Department of Economics, anticipating the unique blend of social and natural sciences he would bring to his subsequent career, which would address a wide-ranging suite of regional and global challenges with a particular focus on water and sustainable development.

Following completion of his graduate work, Rogers was appointed jointly as a lecturer in Systems Analysis in the School of Design and as a research associate in the School of Public Health's Center for Population Studies. He held these positions until 1968 when he was appointed as Assistant Professor of Environmental Engineering on the Gordon McKay Endowment and of City Planning in the Faculty of Design, further recognition of the breadth of his academic interests. He was promoted to associate professor in 1970 and, in 1974, was appointed as Gordon McKay Professor of Environmental Engineering in SEAS with affiliate appointments first in the School of Design and subsequently in the John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Rogers contributed broadly to the science of water management, ranging from mathematical models of groundwater management and capacity expansion problems to issues of equity in water pricing. Professor Casey Brown judges that his most influential technical paper was

“Use of Systems Analysis in Water Management,” co-authored with Fiering in 1986, which uncovered the lack of real-world use of the increasingly sophisticated mathematical models of water resource systems developed in the academy. Rather than complain about political decision-making that disregarded Pareto-optimal options, analysts needed to enhance discourse with decision-makers and improve models to reflect the political decision-making context. Only then could civil society be convinced to adopt Pareto improvements. The paper prompted a much-needed mid-course correction within the field, spawning the co-production of scientific insights with practitioners in what would later be referred to as sustainability science. Notable also was his 2003 paper “Effective Water Governance,” with no fewer than 851 citations in Google Scholar, and his 2006 book, *An Introduction to Sustainable Development*, which attracted an additional 590 Google Scholar citations.

Rogers took particular pride in the role he played in what became known as the Dublin Water Principles, formulated at a meeting in Dublin, Ireland, in January 1992, attended by more than 500 experts from over 100 countries. The meeting approved four guiding principles, forwarded subsequently to the organizers of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Rogers played a critical role in the formulation of Principle no. 4: “Water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognized as an economic good.” Principle no. 3, arguably a step ahead of its time, trumpeted the central role that women should play “in the provision, management, and safeguarding of water.”

While Roger’s work had global importance, he focused often on circumstances that affected the lives of the world’s poorest citizens. This took him to the farthest reaches of the planet to solve problems where they were most pressing, especially in South Asia but also in East Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa. He found innovation where it mattered most, drawing attention often to humble advances that could echo globally. His dedication to improving the prospects of the less advantaged made him a frequent advisor to the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the Global Water Partnership. He received multiple accolades for his service including life membership of the Indian Society of Agricultural Engineers and appointment as an associate fellow of the Third World Academy of Sciences.

Late in life Rogers fell victim to Parkinson’s disease. But, as Peter McGhee noted in a eulogy delivered at the funeral mass on February 20, 2018: “He treated it like a monkey that had jumped onto his back. It made it more difficult for him to keep going forward but he was determined to do so as long as there was breath in his body. The more he was hobbled by the disease, the more determined he was.”

Rogers remained busy to the end. His latest project focused on an initiative to use water savings credits as an innovative solution to foster water conservation in Morocco. Only a few months before his untimely death, he led a group to Marrakech to pursue the project. The team he assembled included Hynd Bouhia, chief executive officer of the Moroccan based Global Nexus financial company, and Susan Leal, formerly general manager of San

Francisco's Public Utilities Commission. Bouhia earned a Ph.D. degree in Environmental Science and Engineering under Rogers's direction at Harvard in 1998. Leal served as a Senior Fellow of the Advanced Leadership Initiative at Harvard from 2009 to 2011. Both were committed to Rogers and were shocked to learn of his passing, though determined to carry on his work.

Rogers was devoted to his wife, Suzanne Ogden, and to his sons, Christopher and Justin. He took particular pride in Suzanne's accomplishments, notably her treatise *Inklings of Democracy in China*. Suzanne referred to Peter appropriately as "the Water Guy." Peter McGhee described him as "a man of reason and faith who has left this world and made us all poorer by doing so," an eloquent tribute to a good friend and respected colleague.

Respectfully submitted,

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