

Dr. Ralph J. Roberts, His Quest for Science and Gold

Raul Madrid with a tribute to Ralph Roberts

Dr. Ralph J. Roberts leaves behind a legacy of excellence in scientific endeavor, overcoming scientific challenges, and the development of predictions within the framework of the gold industry. He also leaves behind the idea that one man, one scientist, one gold explorationist, can truly make a difference.

Ralph is famous for his astuteness and contributions in geologic mapping and the deduction of major geological paradigms that have held up through the test of time. His predictions also stand out in the field of gold exploration not only in the United States, but also abroad.

He conducted pioneer geologic mapping as part of his long and coveted career with the U.S. Geological Survey, within which he spent a major part of his life. As a USGS scientist, his deduction of the Antler Orogeny, defined by the over-thrusting of the deep-water derived Roberts Mountains allochthon over coeval shallower water carbonate assemblages, was nothing short of miraculous and due to his constant devotion to objective geologic mapping. His persistence in this major geologic paradigm clearly reflects his excellence in pursuing scientific research. During his tenure for the USGS in Saudi Arabia, he punctuated his last years with the USGS by rediscovering Mahd ahd Dhab. This ancient gold mine rekindled his simmering excitement for the challenge of gold exploration, which he finally decided to pursue on his return to the U.S.

Retiring from the U.S. Geological Survey in 1981, at age 70, he launched his second career that focused on his ever-increasing passionate search for gold. His paper entitled, "The Alinement of Mining Districts in North-Central Nevada", written in 1960, became one of the most important paradigms that he pursued throughout his life and which predicted major, regional gold belts that have become the site of some of the largest gold mines in the world. During the period, 1981 to 1994 Ralph became involved in advising companies who were searching for gold systems in Nevada. He continued to pursue the alignment of mining districts throughout this period and was instrumental in the discovery of several gold deposits.

In 2002, the University of Nevada Press published his autobiography, "*A Passion for Gold*". This book, although comprehensive to a point, does not come close to defining Ralph's career as many friends and colleagues can attest. One of the most important contributions of Ralph was the delineation of additional gold belts in Nevada and Utah. These additional gold belts, were defined over a period of over 13-14 years with an associate, and will be the focus of exploration in the future. Ralph's book is the beginning not the end to his biography.

We all miss him.