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Harry Schaleman, popular USF St. Petersburg professor, dead at 66

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA. (Aug. 30, 1995) -- Harry J. Schaleman, Jr., a longtime geography professor at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, died today, two weeks after having heart bypass surgery.

Schaleman, a very popular professor who launched the campus's geography program 25 years ago, was extremely active at university, community, state, national and international levels. He was a charter member and past president of the Florida Society of Geographers, past State of Florida Geographer for the Southeast Division of the Association of American Geographers, charter and past-executive board member of the Florida Geographic Alliance, as well as the Florida Geographic Task Force, executive board member of the Florida Council for Social Studies and an appointed member of the Florida Commission for Social Studies Education.

Schaleman was a strong and enthusiastic advocate of geography, sharing his expertise with teachers and students at all levels. Although he was a published scholar, Schaleman considered his greatest accolades and honors to be his teaching and service. He was named "Outstanding Teaching Professor at USF" three times in recent years.

He was credited with making geography come alive for his students, who gave him rave reviews. Students have described him as someone who "turned confusion into clarity," and inspired them to tackle "the world, its peoples and puzzles."

"It's no exaggeration to say that Harry was loved by everyone he came into contact with," said campus executive officer and Dean H. William Heller. "He was a warm, genuine person who loved life and all that goes along with it."

Schaleman also was honored by the National Council for Geographic Education and received the "1991 Distinguished Teaching Achievement Award" for outstanding teaching at the college/university level. He was one of only seven professors in North America to receive this prestigious award.

A tireless traveler, Schaleman visited, studied or resided in nearly 140 countries. He often led student tour groups around the world, and served as a visiting professor for Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

Schaleman called geography "the granddaddy of all sciences, with one foot in the social sciences and one foot in the physical sciences. It's man and his environment. What else is there?"

A new geography laboratory at USF St. Petersburg will be named in memory of Schaleman. Memorial gifts may be made to the USF Foundation.