

Dan Barge Obituary

Daniel Bythewood Barge, Jr., ASCE's 1987 president, died on July 1, 2004 in Nashville, Tennessee. He was 82.

Barge, who grew up on a farm in Alabama, excelled in mathematics and physics in high school and received a full scholarship to study civil engineering at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. He was about halfway through the four-year program when Pearl Harbor was bombed. He graduated in 1943 and enlisted in the U.S. Army.

In Europe, Barge served in a field artillery observation battalion; from posts on the front line he and others used telescopes and sonar to plot the sources of enemy fire. The task called upon some of the basic surveying skills that Barge had acquired at Vanderbilt.

Upon returning to Nashville, he took a job that had been offered to him before he left for the war—at the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway. As a surveyor for capital improvement projects, he was given challenging assignments and moved up the ladder quickly, soon becoming assistant to the chief design engineer.

In 1952, while attending a celebration in Chicago to mark ASCE's centennial that brought together 65 professional organizations, including the American Railway Engineering Association—of which he was a member—he noticed that all of his role models were wearing ASCE pins. The realization was an epiphany for him—one that would affect the remainder of his professional life. "I couldn't wait to get back to Nashville to get an ASCE application," he recalled in a 2002 interview with *Civil Engineering* magazine.

In 1955 he left the railway to establish a civil engineering firm with two of his Vanderbilt classmates. The firm—Barge, Waggoner, and Sumner—specialized in water and wastewater treatment systems. As the firm grew, so did Barge's commitment to ASCE and in 1957 he was elected the president of the Nashville Section.

Barge became the director of District 6 in 1967, was elected vice president of Zone II in 1975, and was a driving force behind the eventual creation of the Tennessee Section. At the same time, his firm—now Barge, Waggoner, Sumner & Cannon—enjoyed enormous success, growing from a small operation to a full-service design firm with approximately 450 employees and 14 offices in five states.

He is survived by his widow, Alice Ann Vaughn Barge; his brother, Thomas Bayne Barge; his children, Marianne and Bob Wightman, Nancy and Scott Summers, Dan and Susan Barge III, Betty and Wilson Primm, Sally and Greg Halwy, and Tom Barge; nine grandchildren and nine step-grandchildren. His first wife, Frances Stevens Barge, preceded him in death.