

UC Santa Barbara Mourns Loss of Geology Professor Edward Keller

Keller Taught at UCSB Since 1976, Led Research on Debris Flow and Natural Hazards



Dr. Edward Keller | Credit: Melinda Burns

By **Ryan P. Cruz**

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UC Santa Barbara Professor Edward Keller, described by colleagues as one of the foremost experts in geomorphology and natural hazards, died on September 9 at the age of 80, according to an official announcement from university Chancellor Henry Yang Tuesday.

Keller, who first joined the UCSB faculty in 1976, was considered one of the top geological experts in surface sediment. Over his nearly 50-year career, he wrote over 150 articles published in scientific journals across the country; helped write at least six

textbooks, including the definitive textbook on tectonic geomorphology, *Active Tectonics*; and collaborated with his wife, Valery, to publish the instructive and photo-filled book *Santa Barbara, Land of Dynamic Beauty: a Natural History*.

Before joining UCSB, Keller was on faculty at the University of North Carolina from 1973 to 1976. At UCSB, his research led the way to understanding changes in the earth's surface sedimentary processes and the history of geological changes in Southern California. He served on the National Marine Fisheries Service Southern California Steelhead Recovery Program, and in 2018 he notably helped study the 1/9 Montecito debris flow.

He earned many honors over his career. He was a fellow of the Geological Society of America, recipient of the 2004 Don J. Easterbrook Distinguished Scientist Award from the Geological Society of America, and member of the American Geophysical Union. In 1994, he was celebrated by his alma mater, Purdue University, with the Outstanding Alumnus Award from the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences.

"The lasting impact of Professor Keller's research, teaching, and mentorship, and his contributions to our campus, to the profession, to our local community, and to our global society, will never be forgotten, and will continue through his research and writings, as well as through those he mentored in our campus community and beyond," Chancellor Yang wrote. "Our hearts go out to his wife, Valery, and their family, as well as to his many colleagues, former students, and friends."

Yang said the campus flag will be lowered in honor of Professor Keller on Tuesday, October 4.