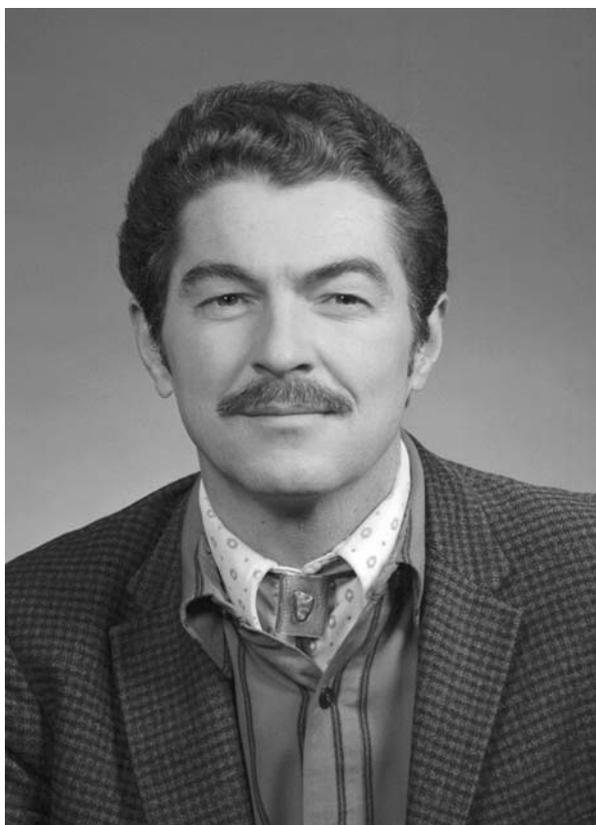


2 William I Rose, Professor

3 **To Robert W. Decker 1927–2005**

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6 Robert W. Decker, volcanologist and former IAVCEI presi-  
7 dent, died on June 11, 2005. Bob was born in Williamsport,  
8 PA. He received the B.Sc. degree from MIT in 1949, the  
9 M.Sc. in 1950, and went on to a D.Sc. from the Colorado

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W. I. Rose, Professor (✉)  
Department of Geological Engineering & Sciences, Michigan  
Technological University,  
207 Dow Building, 1400 Townsend Drive, Houghton,  
MI 49931, USA  
e-mail: raman@mtu.edu  
Tel.: +1-906-487-2367  
Fax: +1-906-487-3371

School of Mines in 1953, doing doctoral research on the  
Ruby Mountains of Nevada. He then served on the faculty  
at Dartmouth College from 1954 to 1979. He twice served  
as Chair of the Department of Earth Sciences at Dartmouth  
and was revered as a master lecturer. At Dartmouth, in the  
early 1960s, many students attended lectures of the best  
professors without taking the class formally. Bob filled  
the lecture hall at his “Rocks 1” with unenrolled walk-ins.  
He became Professor of Geophysics and helped make the  
Dartmouth Earth Sciences Department a place where tal-  
ented people, who would otherwise have never thought of  
the idea, became committed natural scientists. A sabbatical  
leave to Indonesia in 1959–60 led to his interest in volcanol-  
ogy, and he subsequently undertook volcanological work  
in Iceland, Alaska, and the Cascades. Among the students  
he influenced were Dave Harlow, who later played an im-  
portant role in the Pinatubo forecasting experience and Pall  
Einarsson (Columbia-Lamont) who helped Bob directly  
test the sea-floor spreading hypothesis by making geode-  
tic surveys across the mid-Atlantic Ridge in Iceland. Bob  
believed in great field educational experiences and pushed  
many students and colleagues on the Dartmouth faculty  
to study volcanoes. Noteworthy among these was Richard  
Stoiber, a longtime colleague who shared his fervor and  
enthusiasm for science, and who was introduced to active  
volcano studies in Central America by Bob. For more than  
two decades, Decker, Stoiber, Robert C. Reynolds, John  
Lyons, and Andrew McNair were the faculty that made  
Dartmouth Earth Sciences an outstanding student-focused  
educational environment. This stellar faculty made quality  
teaching, student mentorship and research their top pri-  
ority; they supported students above all. Bob was the most  
gracious and accessible of that group of superb mentors.  
From 1975–79, in his final years at Dartmouth, Bob served  
as IAVCEI president and his leadership helped the organi-  
zation to grow and become broader.

In 1979, Bob left Dartmouth to join the USGS and serve  
as scientist in charge at the Hawaiian Volcano Observa-  
tory from 1979 to 1984. Bob was an energetic and per-  
sonable SIC. He was especially interested in geophysical

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50 monitoring techniques and pushed the development of  
51 electronic distance measurements and other techniques  
52 that helped HVO to better understand Kilauea and  
53 Mauna Loa. Bob's leadership in the skillful management  
54 of monitoring and public/media communications during  
55 the 1984 Mauna Loa eruption was full of quality and  
56 grace.

57 Bob moved to California in 1984 and used his professorial  
58 skills, sharpened in Rocks 1 lectures, in a new outreach  
59 effort. With his wife Barbara, he wrote books about science,  
60 especially volcanoes, for everyone. These books are full of  
61 outstanding photographs that demonstrate a considerable  
62 artistic ability that complements the writing. In all, the  
63 Deckers wrote 15 successful books about volcanoes and  
64 national parks, the latest being Volcanoes in the National  
65 Parks ([www.doubledeckerpress.com](http://www.doubledeckerpress.com)).

66 Bob's proudest accomplishment was his leadership in the  
67 establishment of the Center for the Study of Active Vol-

canoes (CSAV) at the University of Hawaii Hilo in 1989  
(<http://www.uhh.hawaii.edu/~csav/>). CSAV's mission is to  
provide training and information about monitoring vol-  
canoes and mitigating volcanic hazards. This center has  
trained more than 100 volcanologists from all around the  
Ring of Fire. In his honor, there is now a Robert Decker  
Memorial Scholarship, which provides funding for CSAV  
students from developing countries (Center for the Study  
of Active Volcanoes University of Hawaii at Hilo 200 West  
Kawili Street Hilo, Hawaii 96720-4091).

We salute a great volcanological leader and generous  
friend who had an exemplary career that touched many and  
communicated broadly and beautifully.

**Bill Rose**

20 September 2005

photo by S. Edward Spaulding (January 1975), Dartmouth  
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