

George W. Sander (1924-2008)



It is with great sadness that we announce that George Wolfgang Sander, Ph.D., P.Eng., passed away peacefully at his home in Dunrobin on August 23, 2008 at the age of 84. Founder and chairman of Sander Geophysics, and a pioneer and innovator in the field of airborne geophysics, he will be sadly missed by his wife Lorly, and his children Jim (Dominique), Helen (William), Stephan, Luise (Reed), Bernie (Kim), Michael (Deborah); his fifteen grandchildren and his three sisters, Eva, Elisabeth and Christiane; and all the staff of Sander Geophysics.

Born in Berlin in 1924, George earned an M.Sc. in geophysics at the Institute of Technology in Stuttgart, Germany in 1949 and went on to earn a Ph.D. in geophysics there in 1951. After obtaining his degree, George emigrated from Germany to the USA, where he worked at the Gulf Research and Development Company, a branch of the Gulf Oil Corporation near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1953, he immigrated to Canada where he worked in Western Canada for a short time as an oil geophysicist with the Western Geophysical Company. He then moved to Toronto where he was engaged in mining exploration with Technical Mine Consultants, and was part of the team which located the Elliot Lake uranium deposits in Northern Ontario. In 1956, he started an independent practice in mining geophysics, and in 1958 incorporated Sander Geophysics Ltd. (SGL).

Between 1960 and 1965, SGL was dormant while George was employed by the Canadian Government in the Polar Continental Shelf Project and the Dominion Observatory (now part of the Geological Survey of Canada), conducting seismic surveys in the Canadian Arctic, the Canadian Shield, and at sea. In 1965, he reactivated Sander Geophysics Ltd. and was President of the company until 2002 when he became Chairman.

Sander Geophysics was originally engaged in ground geophysical surveys, however, it expanded its business to helicopter surveying in 1967, and purchased its first aircraft, a Bell 47G-3B2 helicopter, in 1970. SGL's first airplane, a Cessna 402 was purchased in 1975, allowing the company to perform fixed-wing surveys. George was in charge of all the company's early survey projects, and he also led the research and development work which transformed SGL into a leading airborne geophysical survey company.

SGL currently owns and operates one of the largest fleets of geophysical survey aircraft, including 14 fixed-wing aircraft and one helicopter. Under George Sander's direction, SGL has developed many instruments related to electromagnetic exploration, radiometric exploration and magnetometer surveying, as well as navigation systems. More recently George was very involved in the development and building of AIRGrav, SGL's unique airborne gravity system. Sander Geophysics currently has a staff of over 160, and has recently expanded its office to accommodate continued business growth in its worldwide operations. Sander Geophysics is currently led by George's son Stephan and daughter Luise, who are co-presidents of Sander Geophysics.

Stephan Sander
Luise Sander