



Canadian Council of Independent Laboratories
Conseil canadien des laboratoires indépendants

Michael Maher – Obituary

It is with profound sadness that CCIL announces the recent passing of Dr. Michael L.J. Maher, MIEI, Ph.D., P.Eng., C.Eng., Eur Ing, on November 19th, 2022. Michael served on the CCIL Board of Directors for over 20 years, and as CCIL's 4th President from 2000 to 2002. Michael was awarded CCIL's highest award, an Honorary Membership on May 2nd, 2022.

During his prestigious tenure with CCIL, Michael was a strong advocate of promoting independent testing throughout Canada. Michael also was passionate about providing a safe work environment for employees, and has been active in attempting to minimize the use of solvents in testing laboratories. Michael had a long and distinguished career with Golder Associates, and over the last several years, has been working on a book titled "Pyrite and Pyrrhotite", and only a few weeks ago announced that it was going to publication. The encapsulation of Michael's expertise in this area will certainly form part of his legacy.

In our March 2021 issue of *LabWatch*, CCIL ran a short feature article on Michael's career, which is reprinted below:

**Michael Maher, Ph.D., P. Eng.
Golder Associates Ltd.**

Michael is a Specialist Materials and Forensic Engineer with Golder Associates. He has served on the CCIL Board for over 20 years, was President from 2000 to 2002, and most recently was Director of the Geotechnical/Construction Materials Division.

Born and educated in Dublin, Ireland, Michael's fascination with engineering came early on thanks to a family-owned construction business called Maher & Murphy, started by his grandfather. This family business inspired him to pursue an engineering degree at the University of Dublin, Trinity College, where he also excelled on the college rowing team.

Upon completing the 4-year degree, Michael signed up for a lab-based research Ph.D. program on airfield pavement design. To help pay his way, Michael performed lab testing for some of his professor's commercial clients, one of whom was Golder

Associates Ltd. in the UK.

After being offered a summer job in one of Golder's Canadian offices. Michael jumped at the chance and arrived on Canada Day, July 1, 1978, boarded a bus to London, Ontario, and began working the very next day.



Michael Maher

"I soon realized that my best way to further advancement was to get to supervise a drilling investigation, but I had neither a car nor a driver's license," he recalls. "So here I was, an engineer-in-training, arriving at the drilling site on a bicycle, with hardhat, water-level finder and clipboard on the carrier. The driller and helper doubled over laughing. It took a while for me to establish any credibility, but by the end of the day, they put my bike on the back of the truck and dropped me and my samples at the lab."

Michael continued his duties as a geotechnical engineer in London for three years before being transferred to St. John's, Newfoundland. During his nine-year tenure out east, he found time to pursue his love of rowing by serving as the Newfoundland & Labrador Provincial Rowing Coach for two Canada Games in the 1980s.

In the mid-90s, Michael volunteered to set up and manage a project office in Doha, Qatar providing geotechnical and materials engineering services in Qatar and Kuwait. During his year there, Michael initiated occupational health and safety instruction for lab staff after an incident in which he had requested trichlorethylene (TCE) for asphalt testing and, to his dismay, the technician offered gasoline instead. Michael remained committed to the reduction and elimination of hazardous chemicals, and under his leadership, CCIL hired an Occupational Health & Safety consultant to work with

members in developing best practices for the protection of air quality in labs.

In 2005, Michael was asked to move back to Ireland to help with the integration of a small local consulting company Golder had acquired. It was a marvelous opportunity as not only was this during the “Celtic Tiger” economic boom, but Michael’s mother was still alive at the time and his sisters and brother lived locally. Michael spent the next five years in Ireland.

Today, he and his wife Marilyn live in Whitby, Ontario, and spend summers at their cottage in Honey Harbour. Michael’s hobbies include woodworking, gardening and stamp collecting. Michael is a Level 3 Certified Rowing Coach and helped start the Durham Rowing Club in Port Perry, Ontario where he is also a Past-President of the club. He has also coached competitive rowing to people with disabilities and developed a Guide for Adaptive Rowing.

CCIL extends our sincere condolences to Michael’s wife Marilyn, family, and friends. Michael will be greatly missed by all his colleagues in the testing industry.

A Celebration of Life is planned for the Spring of 2023.