

## TRIBUTE TO PAUL H. RIBBE 1935–2017

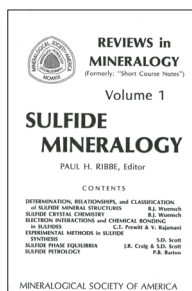
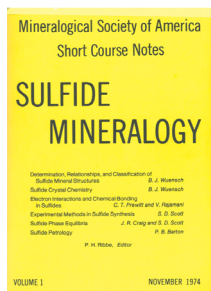
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Paul Hubert Ribbe, a giant in the field of mineralogy, passed away 24 June 2017 at the age of 82. Just eight weeks earlier, he was preceded in death by Elna Ribbe, his wife of almost 59 years. Paul was born 2 April 1935 in Bristol, Connecticut (USA), to the Reverend Walter and Grace Ribbe. He obtained his BS from Wheaton College (Illinois, USA) and his MS from the University of Wisconsin, Madison (USA), both in geology. He was the first American Fulbright Scholar admitted to Magdalene College, University of Cambridge (UK), where he worked at the Cavendish Laboratory with the legendary crystallographer Helen Megaw. He was awarded a PhD in 1963 for his research on the crystal structure of plagioclase feldspars. Following a short post-doc (University of Chicago, USA) and an assistant professorship (University of California, Los Angeles, USA), in 1966, Paul and Elna moved to Blacksburg (Virginia, USA) where he joined the Department of Geology at Virginia Tech. Paul became part of a powerhouse of talent in mineralogy and petrology that included Donald Bloss, Gerald Gibbs, Charles Gilbert, and the late David Wones.



Paul and Elna Ribbe

Over a remarkable 30-year career, Paul Ribbe distinguished himself as one of the world's greatest feldspar crystallographers. He is well known for his 1963 transmission electron microscopy study with Stephen G. Fleet of Cambridge University, which showed that the properties of moonstone are due to alternating lamellae of orthoclase and albite. Paul was President of the Mineralogical Society of America (1986–1987) and was awarded both the MSA Distinguished Public Service Medal (1993) and the Schlumberger Award from the Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland (1995). He also had a mineral named after him: ribbeite, a Mg–Mn<sup>2+</sup>-orthosilicate.



Paul Ribbe's most enduring impact on the world of mineralogy resulted from his visionary role as editor of MSA's Reviews in Mineralogy series. This series began in 1974 when Paul edited a book entitled *Sulfide Mineralogy* under the heading of "Short Course Notes", which contained articles by P. B. Barton, J. R. Craig, C. T. Prewitt, V. Rajamani, S. D. Scott, and B. J. Wuensch. Under Paul's leadership, this book was later reprinted as Volume 1 of Reviews in Mineralogy. This was the first of 53 volumes that Paul handled, developing into what we know today as the Reviews in Mineralogy and Geochemistry series, with more than 84 volumes in this series to date. Known for excellence and comprehensive, these books have been sold or distributed to libraries worldwide.



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Ribbeite. CREDIT: [HTTP://RRUFF.INFO/RIBBEITE](http://rruff.info/ribbeite)

It is fair to say that these books have touched the scientific life of nearly every mineralogist, petrologist, and geochemist in the world since 1974. The mineralogical community owes a great debt of gratitude to Paul Ribbe for his untiring dedication and for setting the very high standards as the Editor of this landmark series of reviews.

Paul's intellect was monumental, certainly in things scientific, but more important to him was his family (he had three kids, nine grandkids, and six great grandkids), friends, those in need, and his Christian faith. He was a skilled counselor to many, both in and out of science. He was a master orator, with an ingenious and clever mind. Paul also had a dry wit. Mostly, he was admired and loved by family, former colleagues and students, and friends.

Mineralogy has lost a truly remarkable person.

**Nancy L. Ross** (Virginia Tech)  
**Michael F. Hochella Jr.** (Virginia Tech)  
**Gordon E. Brown Jr.** (Stanford University)

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TOP ROW: Fine fluorapatite crystal sections from Cerro de Mercado, Durango, Mexico; an excellent standard! BOTTOM ROW: Gemmy forsterites, San Carlos, Arizona (LEFT) and from the Sapat Mine, Pakistan (RIGHT).

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