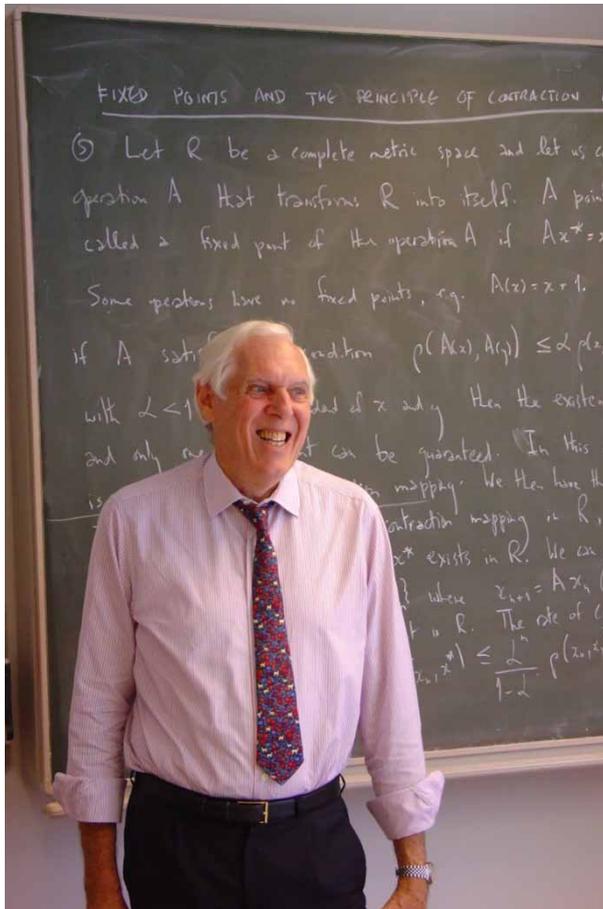


Obituary: Michael B. Abbott (1931–2019)

We deeply regret to report that Professor Michael Abbott sadly passed away in Brussels, on 19 December 2019, at the age of 88.



Michael Abbott was a visionary figure, engineer, mathematician, thinker, and philosopher, co-creator of computational hydraulics, and creator of Hydroinformatics. He was always ahead of his time; his book on Computational Hydraulics in the early 1980s ushered in the new era of numerical modelling of free surface flow problems in hydraulic research and engineering. His lectures and work on Hydroinformatics have now become an everyday discipline within the water industry, with big data and

computational modelling providing everyday tools to manage water systems in countries throughout the world. He inspired a generation of students, with his captivating teaching. Very many of those students today hold high positions in their country of birth, or new country of domicile. In recent times he introduced water professionals to the spiritual dimensions of the water world and encouraged hydroinformaticians to reach out to manage water through a global vision, rather than consider water management on a regional or country-wide basis. For many years Mike Abbott was a Council member of the International Association of Hydraulic Research (IAHR), a dedicated promoter of it, and, above all, was a much valued friend to so many members of the world-wide water communities, including IAHR, IWA and IAHS.

Mike Abbott was born in Barnet, UK, in 1931. He studied civil engineering at the University of London, graduating in 1953. He then studied fluid dynamics, classical mechanics and computer programming at the University of Southampton (1957–58), followed by a diploma at the International Course in Hydraulic Engineering (IHE), in Delft (1958–59), and completing a PhD at Southampton in 1960. This was followed by his appointment as a NATO Fellow, at the University of Amsterdam (1963–64), and then by a lecturing post at the Technical University of Denmark (1964–66). In 1966 he returned to IHE (currently IHE Delft Institute for Water Education), where he progressed rapidly to become Professor in Computational Hydraulics and subsequently Hydroinformatics, and established highly successful Master and PhD programmes in Hydroinformatics. In 2001 he was appointed Emeritus Professor in Hydroinformatics and continued lecturing for many years, working closely with many of the existing staff at IHE Delft.

Mike, together with Roger Falconer, co-founded the *Journal of Hydroinformatics*, launched by IWA Publishing in 1999. His enthusiasm and efforts in developing the journal provided a forum and a key outlet for researchers and practitioners to publish the latest results and developments in Hydroinformatics. The journal continues to flourish to

this day; providing an invaluable source of knowledge in the field and a legacy of the vision and inspiration provided by Mike Abbott.

As an academic Mike Abbott wrote 7 classic textbooks relating to computational hydraulics and Hydroinformatics, with these books still widely read and cited today, and translated into many languages, including Chinese and Russian. He published over 100 seminal journal papers throughout his career. Many of his papers received prestigious awards, such as the IAHR best paper prize in 1979–80 and the ASCE Karl Emil Hilgard Hydraulics prize in 1988. Throughout his life in Europe Mike learnt and spoke 5 languages.

Not only was Mike Abbott an academic, but he was also an outstanding practitioner. In particular, Mike worked closely with the Danish Hydraulic Institute (now DHI Group) as a consultant (1970–2000). During that period he designed and led the first 3rd generation simulation software tools for hydraulic and environmental applications, project managed the System Hydrologic European (SHE) consortium, designed and constructed software for pipe-laying operations that became standard for Det Norske Veritas and, in particular, led the design, development and marketing of DHI's 4th generation

modelling systems: Mouse, MIKE 11, MIKE 21 and MIKE SHE. The MIKE software tools, powered by DHI, form one of the most widely used set of software tools developed by water professionals to help tackle any water environmental challenges world-wide.

In 2003 Mike also co-founded the European Institute for Industrial Leadership (EIIL) in Brussels. Steven Price of EIIL writes: 'Mike wrote 'European Industrial Leadership' providing EIIL with a curriculum and a value set for leadership, which was unrecognisable with those discussed in most business schools of the day and with some of these values only just starting to trend some 17 years later'.

Michael Abbott will be remembered as: an outstanding scholar, author, a brilliant lecturer, a visionary and influential intellectual, and a practitioner with an immense appreciation of multi-disciplinarity. However, above all, to those that knew him well and had the pleasure and honour of working closely with him, he will always be remembered as a true and immensely valued friend, always eager to help, and never mindful of spending his time for the benefit of others. He is survived by his daughter, and his devoted wife and best friend Louise.

Mike will always remain in our hearts.