

Surveyors Community Mourns the Passing of Jim Smith



FIG Honorary Member James R. Smith, born in 1935, sadly passed away on 12 August 2021. Jim Smith qualified as a Land Surveyor in 1961 and had been an active member of the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) since 1968. This year, during the 2021 FIG Working Week General Assembly, Jim was named FIG Honorary Member in recognition of his many contributions to FIG over the past 50+ years.

He was not only Editor of the well-known survey journal *Survey Review* for ten years, but was also the author of many textbooks which have guided more than two generations of Land Surveyors. In 2008, he translated and edited the conversion of the Struve Report from 1855-1857 from early French into English, together with Jan De Graeve.

With the aid of Jan, he subsequently prepared Notes on the History of Determining the Size and Shape of the Earth Using Meridian Arcs, in five volumes of some 2100 pages. He also prepared the Meridian Arcs in East and Southern Africa with Emphasis on the Arc of the 30th Meridian and Connection between the Struve Geodetic Arc and the Arc of the 30th Meridian. Both sets (a total of 3000 pages) are currently being printed and will be available in September 2021.

With Jan De Graeve, he created The International Institution for the History of Surveying & Measurement- an FIG Permanent Institution, which was formed during the FIG congress in Melbourne in 1994. Jim served as Honorary Secretary of the Institute from 1995 and was considered the preeminent authority on the history of surveying.

From 1984, Jim and Jan organized most of the symposia that took place the day before the FIG conferences and/or FIG working weeks. Together they prepared the inscription for the Struve Meridian Arc from Northern Norway to the Black Sea covering 10 countries, with the help of local colleagues. They started this after a paper was read in FIG Commission 1. Jan had the honour of proposing the inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List to the FIG General Assembly in Melbourne in 1994 and the WHL inscription took place during the UNESCO general meeting in Durban RSA in 2005. Jim had been the silent force in achieving this recognition of our profession worldwide: this was the first multi-national achievement covering 10 countries and was the first scientific monument inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Jim and Jan were currently working on the project from Pole to Pole covering the Struve Meridian Arc, the 30th Meridian and the crossing over the Mediterranean sea from Hammerfest to Buffelsfontein covering 135° of latitude.

This news article is based on an obituary written by John Hohol, FIG Foundation President. Visit the [FIG website](#) to learn more about Jim's contribution to the FIG General Assembly and to find out more about The History of Surveying.