

*Richard Passman*

*CORONA Spy Satellite Engineer*



Aeronautical engineer Richard Passman died in Silver Spring, Maryland on April 1, 2020 from complications from the new coronavirus. He was 94.

Mr. Passman is best known to the photogrammetry community for his contributions to the spy satellite the United States developed during the Cold War to monitor the ballistic missile capabilities of the Soviet Union, code-named CORONA. For a decade, CO-

RONA also gave the US Intelligence community a glimpse into the USSR's economy, helping shape foreign policy with more information than the tightly controlled Soviet government would release. CORONA was the subject of the ASPRS book *CORONA: Between the Earth and the Sun*, published in 1997.

CORONA worked by taking photographs from orbit and ejecting them to be caught by military aircraft for developing and analysis. The ejection container, or "bucket", required extensive heat shielding to withstand re-entry through the Earth's atmosphere, and was contracted to General Electric. This heat shielding was Mr. Passman's expertise, which he previously worked on at Bell Labs before moving to GE.

Mr. Passman then went on to work as GE's general manager of space activities before retiring. The CORONA project was declassified in 1995, and only then did the world start to learn about the efforts that went into creating the very first spy satellite.

The ASPRS community would like to thank Mr. Passman, as well as the rest of his team at GE, for their work in protecting the precious photographic cargo from CORONA, so it could be safely retrieved.

Excerpt from *The New York Times* on April 16 2020.

*Randle "Randy" Olsen*

*ASPRS Emeritus Member*



ASPRS Emeritus Member, Randle "Randy" Olsen, age 73, passed away on June 4th in Boulder, Colorado. He was born in Tacoma, Washington to Phyllis and Robert Olsen and grew up in San Francisco, California, which he considered his home. He received both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of California, Berkeley, and he worked with the United States Geological Survey as a

Senior Scientist and Executive for over 40 years. In 2020, he earned an Outstanding Technical Achievement Award from ASPRS and for many years he chaired the review committee for the ASPRS Robert E. Altenhofen Memorial Scholarship. Randy married his wife, Kate Guthrie, in San Francisco and together they adopted three children. When he wasn't working, he loved to spend time outdoors with his family and was a master gardener. He is survived by his wife Kate, children Rachel, Michael, and Laurel Olsen, and grandchildren Andrew Olsen-April and Teddy Horen. Contributions in Randle's memory can be made to the Nature Conservancy in honor of his deep love for the earth.

Excerpt from *The Daily Camera* on Jun. 21, 2020.