

The ASP Voluntary Certification Program*

The ASP Certification Program has been designed to help us all gain professional pride and recognition.

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL of the American Society of Photogrammetry, *Photogrammetric Engineering and Remote Sensing*, contains a four-paragraph statement to answer the question, "What Photogrammetric Engineering and Remote Sensing is." A valid corollary might well be to answer the question, "Who are the people engaged in Photogrammetric Engineering and Remote Sensing?" and, more specifically, "What is a Professional Photogrammetrist?"

In our modern society we like to categorize people into groups that reflect the nature of their work or business. There are bakers, plumbers, lawyers, athletes, bankers, doctors, engineers, surveyors, and, we trust, a niche for photogrammetrists. People find their way into the various job pigeon holes for a great many reasons: Skill and aptitude; special training and experience; higher education and advanced academic degrees; by enjoyment in a particular activity; through inheriting a business; and, finally, the hand of fate that puts people into one or many business activities throughout their working career. During my many years as a member of the American Society of Photogrammetry, I have met members who are in photogrammetric work for each of the reasons cited above. It is the mixture of these many talents that has contributed to the development and expansion of photogrammetry and remote sensing activities.

From the very beginning of our Society in 1934, our members have been concerned with the professional recognition of photogrammetric work and the professional status of people engaged in this activity. Our founders were a group of professional men from government, private business, and instrument manufacturing. They were scientists, surveyors, airplane pilots, and navigators who shared a common

interest and goal—the development of photogrammetry and photogrammetric techniques through the use of aerial and terrestrial photographs. The fact that the Society is celebrating its 50th anniversary attests to the soundness of the original aims of the Society. The tremendous growth of photogrammetric applications and usage gives proof to the importance of photogrammetric techniques in our scientific community.

We are indebted to the wisdom and foresight of the founders of our Society and to the succeeding presidents and board members who have fostered and directed the activities of the Society toward professional status and professional recognition. Our Journal has reported meetings and papers devoted to the review and establishment of guidelines for professional and scientific development. It is, therefore, not surprising that successive committees of the Society explored the nature and depth of photogrammetric work, and ultimately evolved a logical and practical means to define the spectrum of professional activities within photogrammetry.

Notable landmarks were achieved: Professional positions within government Civil Service for photogrammetry; the recruitment and use of professionally trained personnel by private organizations; a policy decision by the American Society of Civil Engineers in 1958 that surveying, including photogrammetry where applicable, was a professional activity and was a part of civil engineering (this policy was adopted by ASP); a "Professional Aspects of Photogrammetry Classification Chart" was prepared and accepted by ASP; and in 1975 the ASP Board established the current Voluntary Certification Program.

So you see, the roots of this certification program established by the American Society of Photogrammetry extend back to the very beginning of the Society. Members are aware of the fact that they may be classified as being a part of a number of different

* Presented at the ASP/ACSM Fall Convention, San Antonio, Texas, 9-14 September 1984.

categories: scientists, engineers, surveyors, artists, geologists, foresters, geographers, instrument makers, optical designers, photo laboratory technicians, and many others. Common to all these designations has been the desire of the members of ASP to be recognized and accepted as Professionals.

Professional people are recognized by their background, skill, training, and proficiency in a particular field of endeavor. They live by a set of rules and/or guidelines either written or generally understood, and they act like professionals in their dignity and dedication to their work. Professional people do not acquire their status by self-acclamation; they must earn such recognition through the eyes of their peers.

It is, of course, true that the road to professional recognition must start somewhere, and for photogrammetrists the initial pathway has been established through the ASP Certification Program.

The Certification Program, adopted by the Society in 1975, is not an end in itself. It does not convey a legal status such as registration for engineers, surveyors, doctors, lawyers, etc. by the various states; it does provide the means whereby guideline rules, established and administered by the members of the Society, can be used to measure the background and responsibilities of persons engaged in photogrammetric work to qualify as Professionals in this program. The accolade, Certified Photogrammetrist (ASP), is a mark of recognition by the Society. It is up to each individual so honored to carry with pride and dignity the designation given by fellow members. The individual agrees to follow the Code of Ethics which accompanies the honor. Certification as a Photogrammetrist is open to all qualified persons, and membership in ASP is not a prerequisite.

As stated in the brochure, *ASP Voluntary Certification Program*, the primary objectives of the program are

- To identify and recognize those persons who, after careful and just appraisal by their peers, are considered to have met the requirements established by the Society for certification.
- To provide a basis for weighing the validity of allegations and complaints that involve practicing photogrammetrists, and for taking appropriate action in connection therewith.
- To encourage persons as yet not fully qualified, to work toward certification as a goal of professional achievement.

Very briefly, this Certification Program provides for the submission of a detailed application; a review of the application by an Evaluation Committee; a declaration of compliance with the ASP Code of Ethics by the applicant; and the establishment of a Professional Conduct Committee to investigate allegations and complaints and to recommend to the ASP Board appropriate action.

The Society has been most fortunate in having an

outstanding group of its members to serve on the Evaluation Committee. The two committee chairmen, Past President John Davidson and currently Past President Professor Arthur McNair, have served with great distinction in establishing guidelines and criteria for the review of each application. The applications are reviewed by all members of the Committee, and references are checked; when necessary, applicants have been requested to explain and clarify their data in order to insure a fair and complete review of their application. As of this date 418 have been certified. There have been a number of applicants who did not meet the basic requirements for certification. Some people with advanced academic degrees, and some who were registered as professional engineers or surveyors, did not meet the requirements for certification as photogrammetrists. This does not in any way reflect upon their abilities or professional stature within their areas of competence; it merely says that their background and position does not meet "nine years of experience in photogrammetry, five years of which were in a position of professional responsibility demonstrating professional knowledge, and competence" in photogrammetry. It is my opinion that the Evaluation Committee has done an excellent job and is to be commended for its diligence and hard work in the review and selection of Certified Photogrammetrists.

The Code of Ethics is the cornerstone of the Certification Program. Without a strong, realistic, and usable Code of Ethics, the designation of a professional is meaningless. The true professional is recognized by (1) a marked skill or above average training and/or education, (2) the receipt of pay for performance in his profession, and (3) the following of rules of conduct either written or unwritten to control and, where necessary, discipline his activities. It is important that a professional person should at all times act like a professional in his relationship with his peers, his clients, and his employees.

The ASP Code of Ethics was carefully and thoughtfully prepared by members of the Society to serve as a "dynamic guide for the conduct of each person who is engaged in the use, development, and improvement of photogrammetry, and for the betterment of our profession." By design, the Code addresses the relationship of the photogrammetrist to himself, to his clients, to his peers, to his employees, and to his profession. He is to be guided "by the highest standards" and encouraged "to strengthen the profession," and "to improve his personal skills and knowledge." He is prohibited from unfair competition with others and undertaking assignments for which he is not qualified.

As a condition of Certification, each applicant agrees to subscribe to the Code of Ethics. A copy of this Code should be prominently displayed by the Certified Photogrammetrist and should be available for his clients, his employees, and his own use.

A Professional Conduct Committee was established by the certification program to review, update, and interpret the Code and to insure fair and reasonable investigations of alleged complaints and violations of the Code. The Committee requires that complaints be submitted in writing giving all pertinent facts; that the accused member be made aware of the charges; that the member be given ample opportunity to appear and defend against the charges; and that the Committee submit its findings to the Executive Committee of the Board for their review and referral to the Board for appropriate action.

To be effective, Certified Photogrammetrists must adhere to the letter and spirit of the Code of Ethics and must report violations to the Professional Conduct Committee. A number of matters which have been referred to the Committee have been settled through a clarification of the Code and the cooperation of the membership. Flagrant violations

hurt all members of the profession, and these should be reported and dealt with as rapidly as possible.

I urge all persons employed in responsible positions in photogrammetric work to apply for certification. Those who are found to be qualified will be welcomed into the growing cadre of Certified Photogrammetrists, and those who are not now eligible for certification have a goal to reach in furthering their development as professionals in photogrammetry. Many federal and state agencies are recognizing certified photogrammetrists in their position and salary classifications. An increasing number of requests for photogrammetric work include the phrase "all work must be accomplished under the direction of a Certified Photogrammetrist (ASP)."

The ASP Certification Program has been designed to help us all gain professional pride and recognition. It deserves the active support and participation of our officers, board members, division directors, and our membership.

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