

## **Phil Brease 1949–2010**

Phil Brease died while leading a school hike in Healy on Wednesday, May 12, 2010. During the days that followed a steady stream of notes relaying respect, friendship, support, and memories of Phil have been received by Phil's family, friends, and co-workers. The consistent theme is what a good person Phil was, providing vignettes into Phil's relationship with a vast network of professional, personal, and civic associates.

Phil started his career as a professional musician, but was quickly sidetracked by his love for geology. After graduating from Central Washington University, Phil followed, in his own words, "a long and unstable slope" toward Denali. His adventures included working for the Wenatchee National Forest in Washington and the Bureau of Land Management as a mineral patent examiner and lease evaluator in Idaho, the north slope of Alaska, and Glennallen. One of his fondest periods was the time spent designing and building sections of the Pacific Crest Trail in Washington's Cascade Mountains. In 1986, Phil came to Denali to work with the mining evaluation process in Kantishna and quickly became an integral member of the natural resource management team. He honed his personal skills working with miners and Departmental solicitors to provide scientific input to contentious situations. During the first half of his Denali career he evaluated mining plans and assessed claims. The latter half of his career provided him with opportunities to interpret the history of mining and restoring mined lands to a variety of audiences.

His tasks during his years at Denali also included evaluating landslides and slumps, geologic mapping, designing the park's first roadside trail, establishing a glacier monitoring program, and work in paleontology and structural geology. He facilitated research with a wide network of geologists and paleontologists, acting as a uniting force to better understand the geology of the Alaska Range. Evidence of the great support he gave to geologic research was the naming of a Devonian brachiopod in Phil's honor, the *Myriospirifer breasei*.

Two of his favorite topics, the Denali Fault and dinosaurs, developed substantial public interest – due in no small part to his legendary presentation style. Education and outreach provided Phil a venue where he could share his passion for geology with core values of civic engagement and information sharing. He was a well known figure in the Denali area, well known by school students, tour drivers and guides in Denali, park staff, and countless visitors. They all became familiar with Phil's engaging mix of wit and excitement in his presentations making the most unsuspecting listeners into geology fans.

Phil's engaging personality was always welcome, particularly his constant insightful wit that forced humor and humility on any situation - painful though some of those puns might have been. That wit, coupled with his dedication, honesty, and sense of civic duty, allowed Phil to make meaningful contributions to his community including membership on the Denali Borough School Board, a local homeowner's association, and countless NPS workgroups. Phil provided a clear and honest approach to evaluating situations and solving problems.

Phil's great attitude, commitment to family and community, and scientific inquiry will be greatly missed, but his love of life has left a legacy that will continue to inspire. He has left big shoes to Phil.

Phil is survived by his wife Barbara Brease, and children Anastasia Brease, Emily Brease, and Michael Liynum.

— Guy Adema

