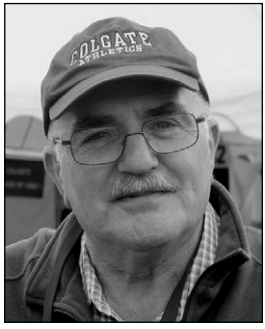
Memorial to Bruce Warren Selleck 1949–2017

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Bruce Selleck, Thomas A. Bartlett Chair and Professor of Geology at Colgate University, died unexpectedly but peacefully in his sleep on 31 July 2017. Bruce was born 30 September 1949 in Potsdam, New York. He was the son of Fred W. and Helen Spanik Selleck, and was raised on the family dairy farm in the town of Pierrepont. On the Albert Marsh USGS 7.5-minute sheet, the family farm is designated "Sellecks Corners," and Bruce began his formal education there in a one-room schoolhouse. Bruce graduated from Colton-Pierrepont Central School in 1967 and received a scholarship to attend Colgate University. Bruce was already interested in geology, and had even attended SUNY (State University of New York) Potsdam's field geology course as a high school student. Bruce would often credit his early interest in geology to an excellent ninth grade science teacher, and the particularly good mineral collecting around the farm where he grew up. At Colgate, he played varsity soccer and was influenced by Jim McLelland and Bob Linsley, the magnetic poles of the department at that time. Bruce graduated from Colgate with an A.B., high honors in geology in 1971. That year, Bruce also married Nancy Barlow, whom he met when they were both 4-H camp counselors in the Adirondacks. Bruce earned his M.A. (1972) and Ph.D. (1975) degrees at the University of Rochester, where he was a student of Zeddie Bowen and Bob Sutton, and worked on the Cambrian–Ordovician sedimentology of northern New York for his dissertation.

In 1974, Bruce returned to Colgate as a one-year visiting instructor, but subsequently was asked to interview for a permanent position, and joined the staff as an assistant professor. Bruce would jokingly refer to his three years at Rochester as the "inter-Selleckian period," the only hiatus in his 50 year affiliation with Colgate. Colgate came to rely on Bruce, calling him to serve in many leadership roles, including chair of the geology department (1983–1986 and 2003–2006), associate dean of the faculty (1988–1990), dean of the faculty and provost (1990–1994), and interim dean of the faculty and provost (2011–2012), as well as chair and director of university committees and institutes, director of study groups to Wales and Australia, and as advisor to a range of sports teams, clubs, and Greek organizations. Bruce also believed strongly in contributing to the community beyond Colgate, and he served on the Town of Lebanon planning board, as well as in leadership roles with the Friends of Rogers Environmental Center and the Adirondack Research Consortium. Bruce was a generous and inspirational mentor to many young faculty in and outside of the geology department, and was known as a gifted and much loved teacher. Many of Bruce's students cherish their memories of wonderful field trips with Bruce, and also his words of encouragement at critical moments and thoughtful advice. He loved taking students into the field, taught in the University of Alaska's field camp for several years in the 1980s, and was a mainstay of Colgate's field camp for more than 40 years. Bruce received the Colgate

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Alumni Corporation Distinguished Teaching Award (1998), the AAUP (American Association of University Professors) Teacher of the Year Award (2006), and the Sidney J. and Florence Felten French Prize (2010) in recognition of his outstanding teaching.

Bruce was a Geological Society of America (GSA) Fellow and had wide-ranging interests. His initial research focused on the Paleozoic sedimentology of New York, but as his career progressed, he worked on a variety of projects with students and collaborators around the world. After his time in the dean's office, Bruce diversified his approach to geological problems by learning stable isotope geochemistry and fluid inclusion analysis, turning some of his attention to diagenesis and alteration studies. Bruce had a long-standing interest in the local geology around Hamilton, New York, both for teaching and research. He recently embarked on a multi-year project to understand the provenance of Devonian rocks across the northern Appalachian Basin. Working with Chuck Ver Straeten and Jeff Chiarenzelli, Bruce collected substantial amounts of detrital zircon data throughout the world-famous New York Devonian strata, including the Hamilton Group.

In the 1990s, with longtime colleague and friend Jim McLelland, Bruce expanded the scope of his research to include tectonic and U-Pb geochronologic studies of the Adirondack Mountains. Bruce, who would always describe himself as a sedimentologist, would coauthor more than twenty articles on the petrology and structural evolution of the Adirondacks with Jim, Jeff Chiarenzelli, Colgate colleagues, students, and others. Their work was the first to recognize the significance of the Lyon Mountain granite that was intruded during the uplift and exhumation of the Adirondacks after the Ottawan orogeny. Bruce's work on the Carthage-Colton shear zone eventually brought him back to where he collected rocks and minerals around Sellecks Corners as a child, and he and Eric Johnson took participants to some of these places during the Friends of the Grenville field conference in 2005. Many geologists know Bruce from field trips, and he was an active participant in the Friends of the Grenville, New England Intercollegiate Geological Conference (NEIGC), and the New York State Geological Association (NYSGA), leading or co-leading 12 NYSGA trips over the years and organizing the 2008 NYSGA conference in Lake George. A session on Adirondack and Grenville geology was held in Bruce's honor at the 2018 GSA Northeastern Section Meeting in Burlington, Vermont; the joint NEIGC 110th annual meeting and the 90th NYSGA annual meeting was held in his honor; and the Adirondack Research Consortium has inaugurated an annual forum on Adirondack contemporary issues in his name.

Bruce is survived by his wife of 46 years, Nancy Barlow Selleck; their two daughters, Caity Selleck (Jim Murphy) and Beth Selleck Fiore (Chris Fiore); grandchildren, Cooper Murphy and Ellie Fiore; Bruce's two sisters, Linda Selleck Kershlis and Laura Selleck (John Jenkins); Nancy's sister, Cindy Lawrence (Kevin Lawrence); and his nephews, Zachary and Adam.

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