

# In Memory of David A. Hastings (1946-2017)

I write these words in fond memory of my mentor, guide and friend, Dr. David A. Hastings who left us for his heavenly abode on the 13th of November, 2017. The sad demise of David has left many of his innumerable friends with a deep sense of sorrow and loneliness. It is unimaginable to think that David will no longer be there with us to enlighten, energize and entertain us in his unique way that few could match.

My first encounter with David was through his "GRASS HOWTO" [1] that was published in 1997. Those were the days when I was just starting to familiarize with GIS and trying my hands at getting to work with GRASS GIS on my Linux desktop. My first face-to-face with David was at a meeting in GISTDA, Thailand in May, 2002. I was pleasantly surprised to hear an articulated and spirited support for Open Source GIS and only realized (after David gave me his card at the end of the meeting) that the statements were coming from none other than the early pioneer of Open Source Geospatial Software and Open Data. It was my great fortune that I had many opportunities to interact with David between 2002-2003 while he was based in UN-ESACP and myself at AIT, Thailand. This was a time wide-ranging discussions on fostering Open Source GIS in Asia. These interactions laid the grounds for the first Free and Open Source Software for Geoinformatics (FOSS4G) Conference that was held in Bangkok in September 2004 [2]. David was a force behind the conference and also the main promoter for the unique "INSTALLFEST" that was organized as a part of the conference.

Our association and friendship strengthened over the years and I had numerous opportunities to discuss with him on a variety of topics and issues ranging from geosciences, sustainability, socio-economics, politics, arts and culture. His deep insights and extensive knowledge never ceased to amaze me. It was between 2004 and 2007 that we started discussing more on a balanced approach to measuring human development and happiness. Some of these discussions culminated into David's seminal work on Human Security Index [3]. I had the privilege of managing his recorded keynote lecture entitled "'Describing the Human Condition: From Human Development to Human Security ". This was the first public presentation of his concept of Human Security Index and was later published as a UNESCAP Working Paper [3] in October, 2009. David continued to be curator of the Human Security Index [4] till he breathed his last and pursued this work in characterization of USA and ASEAN [5].

David started his research career as a Geological Engineer after completing his doctorate from University of Arizona. His first overseas assignment was as a lecturer at University of Science and



Technology in Ghana. He also served at the Ghana Geological Survey before moving to Michigan Technological University and subsequently to USGS as Senior Application Scientist at EROS Data Center. Between 1986-2002 he worked as a Physical Scientist at NOAA National Geophysical Data Center. His last overseas assignment was as a GIS Officer at UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific based in Bangkok, Thailand. He completed the final stint of his illustrious career returning to NOAA National Climatic Data Center from where he retired in 2013. Post retirement at a US Federal Civil Service, he actively pursued his research on Human Security Index (HSI) as a Founder and Curator of the HSI initiative.

As a tribute to his fond memory, the David A. Hastings Award has been instituted for recognizing persons who have significantly contributed to the spread of Free and Open Source Solutions for Geoinformatics (FOSS4G) communities in Asia. The first award was presented to Mr. Yoichi KAYAMA from Japan at the FOSS4G-Asia 2018 conference held in Sri Lanka on 5 December 2018.

David was an ardent traveler and an avid photographer. He lived his life to the fullest and was profoundly humane in his approach to everyone. He leaves behind wonderful memories and deep sense of appreciation with all his friends and colleagues. David is survived by his gracious wife his son currently residing in Colorado, USA. He will be missed for his wisdom and wit and his contributions long remembered.

Goodbye my friend and rest in peace!

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[1] <http://www.tldp.org/HOWTO/GIS-GRASS/>

[2] <http://gisws.media.osaka-cu.ac.jp/grass04/>

[3] [http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/wp-09-03\\_0.pdf](http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/wp-09-03_0.pdf)

[4] <http://www.humansecurityindex.org/>

[5] <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877916614000186>

[6] <http://www.foss4g-asia.org/2018/awards/>