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A Tribute to Peter Niiler

On October 15, 2010, when this special issue was in the final editing stages, the oceanographic community was saddened and shocked by the sudden passing of Professor Pearn Peter Niiler of Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Because of his enormous contributions to oceanography, it seemed natural to dedicate this issue of *Oceanography* to his memory.



Born in Tartu, Estonia, in 1937, Peter moved with his family to western Pennsylvania at the age of 12. He studied engineering and earned a bachelor of science degree from Lehigh University and a PhD from Brown University. After completing a Fulbright fellowship at Cambridge University and a post-doctoral fellowship at Harvard University, Niiler joined Nova University in 1966. He moved to Oregon State University in 1974 and became a professor at Scripps in 1982.

With Peter's passing, we lost a great authority on ocean currents. Known for his fundamental works on regional and global surface circulation, and on dynamics of the mixed layer and their implications for the air-sea interaction and climate system, his contributions had wide impact. Success of the World Ocean Circulation Experiment Surface Velocity Program and establishment of the Global Drifter Program as a component of the Global Ocean Observing System are sizable accomplishments that required Peter's unique blend of talents. He was an engineer, organizer, manager, philosopher, psychologist, politician, orator, and, of course, scientist—a rare combination for one man. His energy helped build a suite of direct measurements of ocean surface circulation that serves as “ground truth” for our rapidly advancing knowledge about the physical state of the ocean. Peter quickly realized and actively promoted the benefits of synthesizing in situ data with remote sensing and numerical modeling. He generously shared and carefully nurtured ideas and careers that will continue to define many directions of modern oceanography.

This special issue of *Oceanography* on The Future of Oceanography from Space is dedicated to the memory of Peter Niiler, a great scientist, great colleague, and great friend.

Nikolai Maximenko and Eric J. Lindstrom
Guest Editors