



SYMPOSIUM TO CELEBRATE THE LIFETIME CONTRIBUTIONS OF
PROFESSORS EMERITI TOM PAULAY AND BOB PARK

Tom Paulay's reply

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an emotional experience to address friends at the end of one's life. I would have preferred to be allowed to fade away quietly as an honorary general of the medieval Hungarian cavalry.

I would like to use only a few minutes to thank you all for being with us tonight.

(i) Sharing the sentiments of Bob, I am extremely grateful for the thoughtfulness, patience and extensive labour offered by the organizers of this event, particularly David Brunson, Andy Buchanan, Peter Moss and Melody Callahan, and many others behind the scenes.

(ii) I was deeply touched by the generosity of the speakers addressing engineering issues. They volunteered many hours in preparing their outstanding contributions to this day. I am particularly grateful to Richard Fenwick for his gallantry in delving into dubious endeavours in my research.

(iii) I am humbled by the presence of those friends who joined us from distant continents, particularly Graham Powell, a soulmate from the day I joined the University.

(iv) I do not know how I could more aptly express my indebtedness to my old friends Hugo Bachmann and George Butcher.

Hugo and his wife Margrith came all the way from Switzerland, where we met some 35 years ago. The 1976 Friuli earthquake in Northern Italy was instrumental in bringing us together. The destructive waves did not recognize the Italian-Swiss border. Instead they challenged Hugo to prepare relevant provisions in a country where none existed.

George and Barbara generously interrupted their peaceful retirement. I expected George to remind us of the similarities between violent engineering and military phenomena. I envied him for having been given the opportunity, some 50 years ago, to use his sharp brain for a noble cause in Korea, with some 1400 fellow New Zealanders, while I, a few years earlier, was relegated to polishing my saddle with the blunt end of my body, in one of Europe's most outdated armies engaged in Russia.

(v) I also wish to thank the Earthquake Commission and the Cement Industry for their support of this event.

(vi) My former students, often referred to as my victims, should know that they were major sources of my happiness during my years at Canterbury. My enthusiasm for teaching was stirred by their response and some of their comments, such as:

"Tom tells us true things but calls them by the wrong names."

(vii) I am grateful for the patience of my 3 special friends Bob Park, Hugo Bachmann and Nigel Priestley, who put up with me during the time consuming labour in producing with each of them a book.

As Bob and others pointed out, I too was disappointed that it was not possible to include Nigel Priestley in this magnificent celebration. Nigel was a member of our most distinguished graduating class in 1963. It is particular pleasure to share this evening with several other famed members of that class. Subsequently, after many years at Canterbury, Nigel was perceived to have been kidnapped by the University of California in San Diego. He maintained intimate contact with us over the next decades, while preaching the earthquake engineering gospel the world over. His research output surpassed the combined efforts of the two older P's. As there are exactly 10 year gaps between our ages, we used to celebrate combined birthdays. Bob and I would have liked to include Nigel in the celebration of our 210 birthday today.

I am also reminded of the occasion when students of one of my more alert classes inserted a message on a rolling blackboard. This note would appear only at the last minute of the lecture. By that time all the space would have been taken up by my scribbles and sketches. It said:

"Tom, your time is up."

Indeed it is. So, once more, I thank all of you who so thoughtfully planned and executed this celebration, and those who honoured us by participating.

The foremost of my gratitude goes, however, to, Herta, my wife for over 54 years. Without her support, care, patience and above all love, I could not have achieved those features which many of you referred to so generously in your accolades. Sometimes she was a little jealous. On such occasions she accused me that I loved concrete more than her. She might be pleased to know that for our remaining years, this important material, cracked or uncracked, will no longer deplete my love for her.

Thank you my friends!