

## Vale Ernie Nickel

Following a short battle with cancer, Exploration and Mining Fellow, Ernie Nickel, passed away on Saturday 18 July aged 83.

Ernie was one of those rare souls everybody liked and will be fondly remembered by his friends and colleagues.

Until recently, even though a post-retirement fellow of 24 years, Ernie still went to work every day on his bicycle. His distinguished career in mineralogical research has seen him publish over 100 papers and write two books. He even had a mineral, Ernie nickelite, named after him. He boasted one of the highest citation records in CSIRO and was ranked in the ISI Highly Cited list for researchers in geosciences.



Ernie's career accolades include two lifetime memberships of the Mineralogical Association of Canada for the best published papers in the society's journal on two occasions, and a fellowship in the mineralogical Society of America.

After completing his university qualification in mineralogy, he was employed in the Mines Branch of the Canada Centre for Minerals and Energy Technology (Canmet), but a minerals boom in Australia enticed him down under. He came to Australia to escape from the senior administrative role he had risen to in Canmet and wanted to return to science. In 1971, he was offered three positions in Australia – luckily, he chose CSIRO.

Ernie took early retirement at the age of 60, but continued to come to work in the same laboratory and office for the next 24 years. His reason for 'retiring' was to allow his salary to be used to employ more young scientists.

In the past few years, Ernie was responsible for managing and cataloguing CSIRO's impressive collection of gold – over 500 specimens of gold nuggets kindly donated by Australian prospector Mark Creasy.

Ernie was also a keen gardener, earned the title of National Master in bridge, spoke fluent German, read French, Italian and Russian, and was a very important mentor to many people in mineralogy.

He will be sorely missed by all those who had the privilege to know him.

We have set up a tribute page in Ernie's honour. You are invited to read the tributes from colleagues and friends or write your own comments and reminiscences which the Alumni will pass on to his family. The tribute page can be found on [AxON - Vale Dr Ernie Nickel](#).