Tom Maze, professor of civil engineering at Iowa State University, died of heart failure on June 8, 2009. His presence, and of course his contributions to the transportation and education communities, are greatly missed in Iowa and around the nation.

You can read reminiscences from many of Tom’s friends and colleagues online: www.intrans.iastate.edu/news/2009/mazeremembered.htm. The simple stories, ranging from playful to profound, capture the unique personality behind Tom’s professional biography. We hope you’ll take a minute to share your own memories via the online form.

His mark at Iowa State University

Dr. Maze began his engineering career at Iowa State University, earning a B.S. in civil engineering from ISU in 1975. He went on to receive a master’s degree from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1977 and a PhD from Michigan State University in 1982. He joined the faculty in the School of Civil Engineering and Environmental Science at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, where he was director of the Oklahoma Highway and Transportation Engineering Center.

In 1988, Dr. Maze returned to Iowa State as an associate professor in the transportation division of the Department of Civil and Construction Engineering and as director of Iowa’s Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP). In 1990 he also assumed co-directorship of Iowa State/University of Iowa’s Midwest Transportation Center (MTC) (the U.S. DOT’s university transportation research program for region 7).

At this point he initiated the Iowa Transportation Center as an umbrella organization for transportation-related research (MTC) and outreach (LTAP) at Iowa State. Through the ITC (later the Center for Transportation Research and Education, and now the Institute for Transportation), Dr. Maze grew a robust program that has become one of the leading university transportation-related research programs in the United States. One of his legacies is the institute’s solid reputation for research, academic excellence, and outreach.
A visionary

Dr. Maze’s vision regarding advanced transportation technologies led to demonstrations and innovations in intelligent vehicle systems for commercial vehicles, transportation-related applications of geographic information systems, and traffic and safety engineering innovations. He also led significant efforts in transportation planning and in statewide management systems for transportation infrastructure that have been models for other states. In recent years, he has focused on weather-related issues through a final program he initiated in 2003, the Center for Weather Impacts on Mobility and Safety (CWIMS).

In 1996, on behalf of Iowa State University, Dr. Maze helped forge a progressive transportation research management agreement between the university and the Iowa Department of Transportation. This efficient administrative tool continues to facilitate the center’s quick response to identified transportation-related research and technology needs in Iowa and reflects a level of university-agency partnering that is the envy of many states.

Teacher and mentor

Dr. Maze taught more than 70 courses covering some 30 topics. He was a demanding but generous academic mentor to graduate students at Iowa State, nine of whom were doctoral candidates in civil engineering. He also took a keen interest in nurturing new faculty members and guided them in developing successful careers. He developed a unique, graduate-level academic enrichment and learning community program at Iowa State called Transportation Scholars. The heart of the Scholars program is a semester-long series of multidisciplinary seminars that Iowa State shares with other universities through distance technologies. To date, more than 200 Scholars have received stipends to work on research problems at Iowa State, met national experts in the transportation community, presented papers for student peers and local professionals, and participated in special events like the annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board.

Mid-Continent Transportation Research Symposium

Dr. Maze was intensely involved in enhancing transportation technology transfer through professional training and outreach activities. In partnership with the Iowa DOT, he initiated the biennial Mid-Continent Transportation Research Symposium in 1996. This popular event provides a professional, Midwest venue for disseminating national research in a format similar to the Transportation Research Board’s annual meeting.

Through ongoing activities like the symposium, as well as the extensive body of work he leaves behind, Dr. Maze’s accomplishments will continue to have an impact across Iowa, the country, and beyond for a very long time.