

## Walter A. Wood, III

Walter Abbott Wood, III was born in Hoosick Falls, New York on December 23, 1907, the son of Walter A. Wood, Jr. and Dorothy Wood Eustis, the founder of the "Seeing Eye" dog program. He was the grandson of Walter A. Wood, the founder of the Walter A. Wood Mowing and Reaping Machine Co. of Hoosick Falls.

Wood graduated from Fay School in Southboro, Mass., attended St. Paul's School in Concord, N.H., and the Institute Bellerive in Switzerland. He was a member of the first graduating class of the American Geographical Society's School of Surveying in New York City in 1932. He studied for four years at the Federal Polytechnic in Zurich, Switzerland. While attending the school he became a world-respected alpinist with many major ascents in the Alps of France and Switzerland. He received an Honorary Doctorate of Science from the University of Alaska in 1955.

Wood trained at an early age in Arctic survival and mountaineering and took part in more than 100 ascents on four continents, scaling the Rockies, the Alps, the Andes, and the Himalayas. Wood's first expedition in 1929 took him on a mapping mission in the Himalayas on the Kashmir Tibet border. His destinations in the 1930s included Panama, Guatemala, Mexico, and Greenland. In 1937, he led ascents of Shiva Temple and Wotan's Throne for a scientific survey of those Arizona mesas.

There were narrow escapes and personal tragedy too. He and his son Peter were marooned on Malaspina Glacier at Mount Hubbard in 1951 when their supply plane failed to show up. On this plane was Wood's wife, his daughter Valerie, and a veteran Alaska bush pilot. After being rescued, the father and son joined the search for the missing aircraft, but it was never found.

Commissioned as an officer in the Army Specialist Corps in World War II, Wood took on various cold weather assignments in Alaska, Canada, and the Aleutian chain. He trained mountain troops and a commando unit in winter warfare and was discharged in 1947 at the rank of colonel.

In his long association with the American Geographical Society, he worked as director of its exploration and field research division and served as president from 1957 to 1967. The society named him a councilor emeritus in 1992. He was president of the Explorers Club in New York from 1967 to 1971.

Wood remarried in 1976 to the former Renee Menassa. He died in West Palm Beach, Florida, on May 19, 1993. His funeral with full military honors was held at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Hoosick Falls. He is buried at the Maple Grove Cemetery.