

Vale Christopher J. Wiles (1947–2014)

Geophysicist, nature and wildlife artist and photographer



Christopher J. (Chris) Wiles passed away suddenly whilst holidaying with his wife Gwen in Clearwater, Florida on 5 December 2014.

Chris was born and raised in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). He graduated from Rhodes University with a BSc in Physics and Applied Mathematics in 1969. Chris worked for Geotrex, from 1970 to 1981, undertaking geophysical surveys around the world, including South Africa, Australia and Canada.

In 1981 Chris joined Newmont Mining Corporation's geophysical department in Tucson, Arizona and shortly afterwards took a short term assignment in Melbourne, Australia. This turned out to

be a much longer transfer lasting almost 10 years, during which time Chris worked on exploration projects throughout Australia and Southeast Asia.

During this time Chris played a major role in the efforts to re-vamp exploration in the Telfer district in the early-mid 1980s. He undertook high resolution aeromagnetic and gravity surveys, which generated a number of skarn-style targets and, as a direct outcome, led to the discovery of the large O'Callaghans tungsten-base metal deposit in 1985.

Chris also worked extensively on Newmont's exploration areas near Kalgoorlie, work that ultimately led to the development of the gold mine at New Celebration.

In 1991, upon the formation of Newcrest Mining Ltd, Chris returned to the Newmont geophysical department in Denver and was Chief Operations Geophysicist until taking on roles in exploration management in the mid 1990s. These included challenging international assignments in Burma, Kazakhstan, the Philippines and Tanzania during a period of low gold prices and tight exploration budgets where he performed exceptionally well under difficult circumstances in these varied cultural settings.

In 2001 Chris was responsible for exploration in the Great Basin, USA and following the Newmont-Normandy-Franco-Nevada merger he returned to Denver to work with the new business opportunities group. In 2004 Chris returned to Perth and set up Newmont Australia's Airborne Services, which he managed until retiring in 2006.

Throughout his long and fruitful career of 36 years as a geoscientist and manager he was known as a likeable, thoughtful gentleman who was highly respected by his colleagues and friends. Chris is recognised for his hard work, integrity, discipline, and cultural sensitivity.

Chris was a very keen and accomplished photographer; and upon retirement took up painting, primarily African bush and wildlife. He came from a long line of artists starting with his great grandfather. Chris loved Africa and its wildlife and returned as often as he could to collect new reference material. A number of his photos and works of art can be viewed on his website www.chrisjwiles.com along with his genealogy and other interesting aspects of his life.

On behalf of his professional associates and friends in the mining industry, we offer our most sincere condolences to his wife Gwen and the family.

We honour and salute Chris Wiles's outstanding service and legacy to the mining industry.

Mike Sexton, Dave Royle, Brian Levet and other friends and associates from years gone by.

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