



Howard J. Pincus

Letter from the Editor

December 31, 1995 marks the end of my three-year term as Technical Editor of the *Geotechnical Testing Journal*. When my term began, my predecessors in this position gave me help and counsel, for which I have been grateful throughout my term. I am very pleased to be succeeded by the partnership of Professor Ronald Chaney and Professor Kenneth Demars, each of whom is abundantly well qualified to continue this important work. This team has worked very successfully on other important ASTM projects. I stand ready to give them as much—or as little—help as they wish.

A few words in parting might be of interest to GTJ readers.

The quality of incoming manuscripts has improved during my term of service. (I cannot claim credit for this.) The number of manuscripts submitted has been sufficient to maintain a healthy but manageable page count. The number and quality of contributed discussions of GTJ papers indicate that the *Journal's* readers do read, think, and react maturely and competently.

The distinguished Editorial Board has been joined by some outstanding contributors to the international geotechnical literature. The continuing and new members of the Board provide a pool of talent that ensures still further improvement in the quality of the *Journal*. Editorial Board members have assumed larger roles in the editorial process, and it is my understanding that Professors Chaney and Demars will seek to increase further the participation of Board members in the editorial process. And, with the recently acquired representation on the Board of previously unrepresented countries, it is reasonable to expect an increase in authors, referees, and subscribers from those countries.

Despite the pressures on libraries to cut subscriptions to periodicals, the *Journal* has survived the worst period of recent cutbacks with a decline in readership much smaller than that of many comparable journals. With the expected turnaround in the economy, the expanded scope of subject areas, and the increase in interna-

tional representation on the Board, it is reasonable to be optimistic about the size of the *Journal's* readership in the near future.

I believe that reviews of recently published books and software can provide a valuable service to the readers of GTJ. My goal of about one such review per issue, although reasonable, has not been reached. Chronic understaffing at mid-level in the ASTM Publications office is largely responsible for this shortfall.

Turnaround time for manuscripts (time between initial submission and publication) has decreased during the past few years. This trend could be accelerated with the installation and operation of a suitable database in the Publications Office, with remote access provided for the Technical Editor and members of the Editorial Board. Additional staffing in the ASTM Publications Office would also improve this operation. As matters now stand, the turnaround time is not out of line with respect to that of comparable journals, but improvement is feasible and would clearly be helpful to both authors and readers. Sometime in the future when consideration will be given to increasing the number of issues from four to six, it will be absolutely necessary to have online an adequate operating database and adequate experienced staff; otherwise, turnaround times will go off the chart.

In closing, it has been rewarding for me to have served as Technical Editor. I am pleased to have had this opportunity to serve the geotechnical community in general and the membership of ASTM D 18 in particular. This has been a learning experience, especially in technical areas in which I cannot claim expertise. I am grateful to the Committee on Publications and the D 18 Executive Subcommittee for their continuing support and advice. I am also indebted to members of the Editorial Board for their highly valued contributions. Finally, the splendid help generously provided by Ms. Barbara Stafford of ASTM Publications merits very warm thanks.

Howard J. Pincus
Technical Editor