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LISTING BY DEPARTMENT

Mechanical, Aeronautical, and Nuclear Engineering:
Professor Arthur Bergles
Professor John Sutton Cartwright
Professor Robert E. Duffy
Professor Frederick Fongsun Ling
Professor Rudolf E. Slovacek
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Professor William Nelson Gill
Professor Arthur E. Bergles  
1935–2014

Dr. Arthur E. Bergles, a former Dean of Engineering at Rensselaer and a worldwide leader in the area of heat transfer, passed away on March 17, 2014, at the age of 78. Dr. Bergles joined the Rensselaer faculty in 1986 as the Clark and Crossan Professor of Engineering and director of the Heat Transfer Laboratory. He went on to serve as Dean of Engineering from 1989 to 1992. After retiring in 1997, he remained active on the Rensselaer campus as the Clark and Crossan Professor Emeritus.

Prior to joining Rensselaer, Dr. Bergles was a faculty member at his alma mater, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he earned his bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees. Later, he was on the faculty of the Georgia Institute of Technology, and he also served at Iowa State University as chair of the Department of Mechanical Engineering and Anson-Marston Distinguished Professor of Engineering.

Dr. Bergles was recognized as a world leader in heat transfer and thermal science. He published more than 400 research papers and 26 books and presented more than 400 invited lectures. He received many awards and considerable recognition for his work. Dr. Bergles was elected to the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) in 1992, and as a foreign member to the English Royal Society of Mechanical Engineers in 2000.

Active in professional societies, Dr. Bergles was a fellow of the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE), American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE), as well as a fellow, honorary member, and past president of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME). In addition to several honorary professorships and prestigious overseas fellowships, Dr. Bergles received honorary doctorates from the University of Porto in Portugal, Rand Afrikaans University in South Africa, and the University of Rome-Sapienza in Italy.
Dr. Bergles was deeply committed to education and supporting the careers of young scientists. Over his career, he advised 82 thesis students. In honor of his retirement from Rensselaer, the Dr. Arthur E. Bergles Scholarship was established with gifts from friends, faculty, colleagues, and corporations. Additionally, the Bergles-Rohsenow Young Investigator Award in Heat Transfer is presented annually through ASME.

Art was very accomplished professionally, but he always acted as a gentleman. Yes, he had his opinions, likes and dislikes, but he treated everyone well, with respect. He thoroughly enjoyed mentoring students (both undergraduates and graduate students) as well as young professors, mid-career professors, and other professionals, whether at the school he was teaching at or people he met through his activities in professional societies. He had the respect of all who interacted with him. With students, he would probe, ask questions, assist in understanding, all in a quiet, gentle manner to help them learn and understand. With young faculty, he would do the same to help them grow professionally. He also always carried a camera to record his meetings with people, the places he visited, and the various things he saw. There is no way anyone could escape without Art taking a picture. Art was a formal, private individual who reveled in his interactions with others. He had a big impact in many people's lives.

Submitted by:  
Professor Emeritus Michael Jensen, Ph.D.  
Department of Mechanical, Aerospace, and Nuclear Engineering  
Excerpt from SoE News 2015
Professor John Sutton Cartwright
1924–2014

John Sutton Cartwright, 90, passed away on Wednesday, September 17, 2014, at Community Medical Center, Toms River, NJ. He was born in Plainfield, NJ, and lived in various towns in New York and New Jersey before moving to the Toms River area in 1984. John proudly served in the US Navy for six years, seeing action in major battles during World War II; he was on the USS Miller, USS Fargo, and USS Eugene A. Greene, and achieved rank of Quartermaster First Class. He graduated with his master’s from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where he also was an assistant professor. John worked as a mechanical engineer for Western Electric for 25 years before retiring in 1984. John was active in many clubs, including the Lions Club, Masons, American Legion, VFW, and the Hopewell Valley Regional School District, of which he was president. He also had five patents.

John was predeceased by his daughter Diane Lynn Cartwright and his parents, John and Esther Cartwright. He is survived by his devoted wife of 63 years, Gloria, and his son John S. Cartwright III and his wife Lillian Phillips Cartwright of Hopewell, NJ.

Published in Asbury Park Press on Sept. 21, 2014
I am saddened to report the passing of James Crivello, Professor of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, on February 25, 2015. Dr. Crivello joined Rensselaer in 1988 after completing a very successful industrial career of 22 years at the General Electric Research and Development Center, where he was elected a Coolidge Fellow. Throughout his career at Rensselaer, he was a valued and productive researcher and teacher in the areas of organic chemistry and synthetic polymer chemistry. His contributions in the field of additive manufacturing and 3D printing remain very influential; his invention of a new class of photoinitiators, known as “Crivello Salts,” and designed for inducing cationic polymerization of epoxy resins, opened the door for the first wave of additive manufacturing systems. Most of the current 3D imaging and printing technology in use today employs epoxy resin technology and cure chemistry based on work done in his laboratory. A measure of his scholarly activity is demonstrated by the more than 330 publications, 144 patents, 15 book chapters, and 3 books to his credit.

During his industrial career, Dr. Crivello received numerous awards recognizing the importance of his work, including two IR-100 awards by Research & Development magazine. For the 50th anniversary of the Journal of Polymer Science, the editors selected Dr. Crivello’s paper on the photodecomposition of sulfonium salts as a means for microelectronic patterning and additive manufacturing as one of the 50 most influential papers that had been published in that journal since its inception.

In addition to his research activities, Dr. Crivello also served the polymer community through his participation as a member at large of Polymeric Materials: Science and Engineering (PMSE) in the American Chemical Society (ACS), and by organizing and teaching several short courses and workshops on radiation curing of coatings. For many years, he served as an associate editor.
for *Chemistry of Materials*, a flagship ACS journal in the interdisciplinary area of chemistry and materials. He was elected a fellow of the PMSE and also named a fellow of the ACS. In 2014 he was honored with the Tess Award at the annual ACS meeting for his significant contributions to coatings science, technology and engineering.

Dr. Crivello received his B.S. in Chemistry from Aquinas College and his Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame for his work in organic chemistry.

In March 2016, his colleagues and former students held the “James V. Crivello Memorial Symposium” at the ACS national meeting in San Diego, CA.

Submitted by:
Shirley Ann Jackson, Ph.D., President
Professor of Physics, Applied Physics, and Astronomy
Professor of Engineering Sciences
Robert “Bob” E. Duffy, of Wynantskill, a former professor of the Department of Mechanical, Aerospace, and Nuclear Engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, passed away peacefully on October 12, 2015, surrounded by family and friends. He was survived by his brother, Walter; his beloved wife of 62 years, Ann; his children, R. Brian (Michelle) Duffy, Patricia Duffy, and Suzanne (Brian) Vohnoutka; his eight grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

Professor Duffy was born on May 27, 1930. He earned all his academic degrees at Rensselaer (’51 B.S., ’54 G, and ’56 Ph.D. in Aeronautical Engineering). His thesis advisor was Professor Henry Burlag, Jr. (Rensselaer class of 1944). In 1956, Dr. Duffy joined the Aeronautical Engineering Academic Program at Rensselaer as an Assistant Professor of Aeronautics and was later promoted to an Associate Professor in 1965. From 1968 to 1975 he served as the chairman of the Aeronautical Engineering Program, and when the program was merged in 1975 with other programs to form the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Aeronautical Engineering and Mechanics, he served as the head of the Fluids group. Professor Duffy retired from Rensselaer in 1995. During his 39 years as a professor, over 3,000 students enjoyed his inspiring teaching of aerodynamics and flight mechanics and had learned from his skills and expertise on their way toward successful careers in academia, government, and industry.

Dr. Duffy was an expert in high-speed aerodynamics. He was the author of over 65 published archival journal papers and research reports in the areas of applied aerodynamics, flight mechanics, and experimental fluid dynamics. Two of his significant contributions were on the nature of “turbulence in shock induced flows” (1985) and the “aerodynamic hinge moments on a sealed trailing-edge flap at high Mach number” (1991). Professor Duffy had served as consultant to numerous governmental agencies, industrial concerns, and ventures. He was an active member of the Atmospheric Flight Mechanics Committee of the American Institute of Aeronautics & Astronautics (AIAA), an associate fellow of AIAA, and a longtime associate editor of the AIAA
Journal of Aircraft (1981–2014). Dr. Duffy was recognized for his various scientific contributions in Who’s Who publications, including Science & Engineering, Business & Finance, and others. He was a member of the honor societies Sigma Gamma Tau, Tau Beta Pi, and Sigma Xi.

In addition, Dr. Duffy was an active member of his community. He was a member and later the chairman for the North Greenbush Planning Board from 1971 to 1988. He was also a member of the Kiwanis International and was the treasurer and co-owner of the Burden Lake Country Club from 1968 to 1974.

Submitted by:
Professor Zvi Rusak, Ph.D.
Department of Mechanical, Aerospace, and Nuclear Engineering
Professor William Nelson Gill
1928–2015

William Nelson Gill, editor-in-chief of Chemical Engineering Communications for 35 years, was a major force in the chemical engineering community in the latter half of the twentieth century and the first decades of the twenty-first. After graduating from Syracuse University in 1951, Bill began his engineering career at American Blower Corporation. Following a brief spell in industry, Bill returned to Syracuse where he received a Master’s Degree in Psychology and his Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering in 1960. He immediately began his teaching career at Syracuse in the Chemical Engineering and Metallurgy Department. After five years, Bill became a full professor and moved to become the Chairman of the Chemical Engineering Department at Clarkson College of Technology. While at Clarkson, Bill co-wrote and received an NSF program grant that was responsible for a large expansion of the department, dramatically enhancing the national stature of the department and Clarkson as a whole. In 1971, he left Clarkson and joined the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo as Dean, Provost, and Professor of Engineering and Applied Sciences. Bill was responsible for bringing Eli Ruckenstein to the US from Romania, first to Clarkson and then to SUNY, where Eli is still active. In 1977 and 1978, Bill was a Fulbright Senior Research Scholar at University College London. He then spent the next nine years as a professor in the Chemical Engineering Department of SUNY at Buffalo. He concurrently served from 1980 to 1982 as the Glenn Murphy Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Iowa State University. Bill then spent another year abroad as a Fulbright Senior Research Scholar at the Universities of Queensland and New South Wales, traveling all across Australia. Bill left SUNY in 1987 to join Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute as head of the Chemical Engineering Department. Two years later, he was named the Russell Sage Professor of Chemical Engineering. While at Rensselaer, Bill was again responsible for overseeing a dramatic change in the growth and focus of the department, especially in the areas of microelectronics and biotechnology.

Bill earned many awards in addition to being a Fulbright Fellow. These include Rensselaer’s William H. Wiley Distinguished Faculty Award in 1994 and the Best Paper Award at
TECHCON ‘96, ‘98, ‘11, and ‘12. He was named a fellow of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE) in 1991 and Alumnus of the Year in 1977 by Brooklyn Technical High School in recognition of his contributions to engineering education in New York State.

In 1992, Bill was honored with the Lectureship Award from the Chemical Engineering Division of the American Society for Engineering Education. He was cited for his “outstanding contributions to fundamental chemical engineering theory and practice.” He also has given numerous invited lectures, including a plenary lecture at CHEMCON 2000 in Calcutta, the keynote lecture at the 1988 National Heat Transfer Conference, and the Barnett F. Dodge Lecture at Yale University in 1987.

Over the years Bill made seminal contributions to the theory of convective dispersion, membrane technology, chemical-mechanical polishing (ushering in the age of copper interconnects and dual-damascene processing), the mechanical, thermal, and electrical properties of low dielectric constant insulators, chemical vapor deposition, and finally, dendritic crystal growth.

Bill served as editor of Chemical Engineering Communications from 1979, tremendously increasing the scope, quality, and readership of the journal. He has published over 250 refereed articles and mentored over 50 graduate students. On behalf of Chemical Engineering Communications and all the graduate students and young faculty Bill has mentored over the years, we would like to thank him for his guidance and his service to engineering education, to us, and to the chemical engineering profession.

Submitted by:
Joel Plawsky
Professor and Department Head
Isermann Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering
Fredrick Fongsun Ling was born in Qingdao, China, in 1927 and passed away in New York City in November 2014. He came to the US in 1947 on a scholarship to attend Bucknell University, where he received his B.S. in Mechanical Engineering in 1949. He continued his studies at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, receiving his DSc in 1954. That year he was appointed Assistant Professor of Mathematics at Carnegie Tech, but shortly thereafter joined the Department of Mechanics at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1956. He was chairman of that department from 1967 – 1974, and then became chairman of the newly formed Department of Mechanical Engineering, Aeronautical Engineering and Mechanics from 1974 – 1986. He held the title of William Howard Hart Professor of Rational and Technical Mechanics from 1973 – 1988. He later served at Columbia University from 1990 – 1992, and the University of Texas at Austin as an endowed professor from 1992 until his retirement in 2002.

His research field was tribology (friction lubrication and wear), in which he was one of its seminal and most notable figures. In 1973 he published the groundbreaking text of the field, entitled *Surface Mechanics*. He was recipient of numerous honors, most notably election to the US National Academy of Engineering in 1970, and honorary membership in ASME. In this brief missive, I could not do him justice by listing his many specific accomplishments.

Prior to his influence, our department was of regional importance with a very high-quality undergraduate student body. During something like the five year time period between 1975 – 1980, we were transformed into a modern university department, and a power to be reckoned with in the field of tribology. Fred spearheaded this effort, with others, of course. Although local academic memories tend to be short, he is still held in reverence in his former department (now Mechanical, Aerospace, and Nuclear Engineering) at Rensselaer. By both his intellectual and moral force, he directed us to the 21st century.
He had a calming presence that elicited the best in people. There was never the slightest hint of arrogance or bragging in his manner, although he had a lot to brag about. When he suggested a particular course of action, one never doubted for a second that his motive was for your benefit, or for the greater good, not his personal aggrandizement.

He was a man of the utmost integrity and set a standard to which each of us individually, and to which the faculty collectively, could only hope to aspire.

Submitted by:
Professor John Tichy, Ph.D.
Department of Mechanical, Aerospace, and Nuclear Engineering
Cornelius T. Moynihan, Professor Emeritus of Materials Science and Engineering, passed away on December 22, 2015, after a brief illness at St. Peter’s Hospital. He was 76 years old. Dr. Moynihan received his B.S. in Chemistry from Santa Clara University in 1960, then earned his M.S. in 1962 and his Ph.D. in 1965, both in Physical Chemistry from Princeton University.

“Connie” started his first job as an assistant professor at State University at Los Angeles. After he became an associate professor, he moved to the Catholic University in Washington, DC, where he was promoted to a full professor. He joined Rensselaer in 1981 and worked here until he retired as a professor emeritus in 2000.

Throughout his academic career, Connie had specialized in amorphous materials (molten salts and inorganic glasses) and had published approximately 180 scientific papers. In particular, he contributed to analyzing a complicated structural relaxation phenomenon of glasses, and the most popular equation to describe the relaxation bears his name as “The Narayanaswamy-Moynihan-Tool relaxation formalism.” He was a fellow of the American Ceramic Society and was known for his high-quality research and rigorous teaching of thermodynamics.

Connie’s entire professional career was in academia, where he truly enjoyed both teaching and research. He was a good teacher with a booming voice, and thermodynamics was always his favorite subject. In fact, at many professional meetings, he used to quiz young colleagues on thermodynamics of glasses, as if he was quizzing graduate students at their Ph.D. qualifying exam.

There is an old Confucian saying: Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life. In this sense, Connie never had to work a day in his life.

When Connie joined Rensselaer, there were already three faculty members who worked on glasses in our department: Bob Doremus, Robert MacCrone, and Minoru Tomozawa. Thus we could easily get an expert opinion without going to any conference. Whenever Professor
Tomozawa's students obtained an interesting research result, he would show the data to Bob and Connie. Bob, being always a nice person, responded with “very interesting.” Connie’s response was “not bad.” It took some time to realize that Connie’s “not bad” was the same as Bob’s “very interesting.”

Connie was uncompromising when quality and integrity were involved. There was a time when scientists from a company visited Rensselaer glass researchers to discuss the possibility of collaborative research. Their research idea, however, was not sound, and while we mostly gave harmless comments, Connie soundly criticized the idea—they never came back.

There was a unique aspect of his life that Connie rarely showed while he was at Rensselaer. At professional meetings, especially during social hours, he would play his guitar and sing old Irish songs, much to the delight of his colleagues. We enjoyed this tremendously, and we were sure that Connie did too.

After he retired he would stop by his office frequently. We would catch him in the hallway to tell him our new ideas, hoping to have him say “not bad,” or to get his advice on how to teach a particular thermodynamics concept. We will miss him greatly.

Professor Cornelius Moynihan is survived by his daughter, Kathleen Falls, Rensselaer Class of 1985; his son Timothy Moynihan, Rensselaer Class of 1995; his sister, Sheila Moynihan Wilson; and his partner, Maria Resnick. Connie always loved a good joke and enjoyed taking his children and later grandchildren to see science fiction movies. This inspired his daughter to become a children’s book writer, while his dedication to teaching led his son to become a science teacher.

Submitted by:
Pawel Keblinski
Professor and Department Head
Materials Science and Engineering Department
Professor John Salerno
1949–2015

John Salerno was born in Troy, NY. He was a graduate of MIT and completed his Doctorate in Biophysics at the prestigious Johnson Foundation of the University of Pennsylvania. At Rensselaer John eventually attained the rank of Professor of Biology and served for a time as Chair of the Biology Department.

John had a major role in developing Rensselaer’s Bioinformatics (BFMB) degree program, which was one of the first in the country. He was also involved in development of the Biochemistry and Biophysics (BCBP) degree program. John was an excellent teacher and a popular undergraduate and graduate research advisor.

For many years John’s research, using biochemical and biophysical approaches, focused on electron-transferring proteins involved in cellular energy transduction. I got to know him and his research fairly well because we both participated in national and international bioenergetics conferences. He was very highly regarded in the field. John later made important contributions to understanding the functioning of nitric oxide synthase enzymes.

John was a highly valued colleague and friend. I consider him to have been the smartest person I ever personally knew. I learned a lot when I sat in on advanced graduate courses taught by (or with) him. When I needed someone to run an idea past, or to explain something beyond my knowledge, John was the person I usually turned to, and he was always helpful.
John’s wife, Susan Smith, who earned her doctorate from Rensselaer, often collaborated in his research and was a valued teacher of courses in molecular biology at Rensselaer. When they both left to join the faculty at Kennesaw State University in Marietta, Georgia, where John became the Neel Chair in the Department of Chemistry and Biology, it was a tremendous loss for Rensselaer.

Submitted by:
Joyce Diwan
Professor of Biological Sciences

John Salerno was a key figure in the development of the Biology Department during his tenure at Rensselaer. He was a major contributor to several successful grant applications to the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. As such, he was primarily involved in the development of the undergraduate program in Bioinformatics and Molecular Biology and the distance learning option in Bioinformatics for off-campus professionals. He was also responsible for the acquisition of the high-end computer hardware, displays, software, and other instrumentation needed for Bioinformatics, as well as the renovation of dedicated space for computational and experimental research and teaching.

As Chairman of the Biology Department, John played an important role in the development of the faculty, as well as of the undergraduate and graduate programs. He also provided important input from the Biology Department for the design of the biotechnology and interdisciplinary sciences center.

Submitted by:
Robert Parsons
Associate Professor of Biological Sciences

It was a joy to know John Salerno as a friend and colleague. I was awed by his depth of knowledge in biology and biochemistry. Conversations with him were always stimulating. His insightful comments when discussing my research led me at times to think about a problem in new ways, even though his research and mine dealt with completely different topics. His knowledge and understanding extended well beyond science. John was a true intellectual.

Submitted by:
Henry Ehrlich
Emeritus Professor of Biological Sciences
I was chair of the search committee that hired John Salerno, when the department chairman was Joe Landau, and I recall the big role John played in the development of undergraduate programs via external funding. John always impressed me with his broad range of scientific interests and his quick insight into research problems. An offhand suggestion that he made to me once led to a full paper from my lab.

On a more personal side I have a deep memory of John teaching his daughter Kathleen how to count when she was pre-verbal, at a party at Carl McDaniel’s house! Our good friend Gary Schwartz recalls her later as the smartest child he had ever known. My wife and I were guests at John and Susan’s home more than once, and enjoyed the relaxation and hospitality. Not long ago I ran into John Jr. at Manory’s and had a nice chat with him; he was about to go to graduate school. I was very sorry to see John and Susan leave Rensselaer, but I understood there were strong reasons for doing so. The last time I saw John was at his father’s wake with his younger daughter. We had little time to catch up. I regret his passing.

Submitted by:
Harry Roy
Professor of Biological Sciences

John Salerno was my faculty mentor and the person I deem responsible for bringing me to Rensselaer. John and I, together with his wife Susan Smith, Donna Crone, and Mark Wentland, started one of the first undergraduate bioinformatics programs in the country. When I came for my second interview, John spent the whole day with me driving around the Capital Region, checking out houses and restaurants and talking up a storm. He could weigh in on absolutely anything. After I signed on and showed up in Troy, my family and I spent our first year living in John’s rental property. He was my friend, my colleague, and my landlord! I will never forget conversations with John in the third-floor hallway of the Science Center, John heaving pennies down the hall to punctuate his remarks, cheering when they made it to the end.

Departmental parties at John and Susan’s house were the highlight of my early career. John had a unique way of starting a conversation. He would say, “Chris, you’re an idiot. You want to know why?” Of course I always wanted to know why, and there was always a good story behind
his acerbic icebreaker. It was a publication I had overlooked, or a funding opportunity, or a hot research topic. And I came to realize he wasn't calling me an idiot. It was just his way of starting up a conversation. I was sorry our friendship ended and John and Susan's time at Rensselaer ended with it. It was a great loss for me and for the department.

Submitted by:
Chris Bystroff
Professor of Biological Sciences

It's still hard for me to believe that John isn't around. I taught with John, I collaborated with John, I served on committees with John, I argued with John…. Even though we hadn't been in touch for a while, it was comforting to know he was out there, continuing to do research, inspire students, bedevil his competitors, make his collaborators look good, and rant at fools. So news of his death last December was a blow to all of us who knew him and relied on him to keep on being John. My deepest sympathies to everyone in his family, both personal and scientific.

Submitted by:
Jane Koretz
Professor Emerita of Biological Sciences

John is the reason I'm at Rensselaer. He was the major force in setting up the bioinformatics major at Rensselaer. When it was approved, he hired me to develop and teach the molecular biology course components. I am grateful for the opportunity. John was a person of big ideas and strong opinions. Whether you agreed or disagreed with him, he told you what he thought without any sugarcoating. John had a fun-loving side, too. He would do little things to spark a reaction, like the many times he'd roll a penny down the hall to see if would make it to the opposite wall, much to the chagrin of Sheila, the janitor. He'd have a mischievous grin when she'd yell at him about it.

Submitted by:
Donna E. Crone
Lecturer in Biological Sciences
Rudolf E. Slovacek, age 90 and a longtime resident of Rexford, NY, died on January 13, 2015. Rudolf (Rudy) was born on September 23, 1924, in Schenectady. He was the son of the late Anton and Ludmila (Tomecek) Slovacek. He graduated Mont Pleasant High School in Schenectady (1942) as class valedictorian. Rudy earned his Bachelor’s Degree in Electrical Engineering at Union College, Schenectady (1946); his Master’s Degree in Nuclear Engineering from Indiana University, IN (1949), and his Ph.D. in Nuclear Engineering at Rensselaer (1964). He served the US Navy in the positions of executive, communications, and supply officer during World War II. Rudy’s passion was research and he was a nuclear physicist at Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory in Niskayuna, NY. He was also a professor at Rensselaer, where he ran experiments in the Linear Accelerator Research laboratory. His contributions to the success of the Linear Accelerator laboratory were both numerous and significant, and apparatus he developed were actively used in research beyond his lifetime. Rudy published and co-authored 110 research articles and developed many patents. He received the Outstanding Technical Contribution Award in 1987 from General Electric Power Systems. Rudolf was a longtime member of Our Lady of Grace Church in Ballston Lake and sang in the choir. He studied and enjoyed the cultures of the Old World, traveling to countries such as Greece, Russia, Czechoslovakia, and Norway. Some of his favorite pursuits included folk dancing, singing, foreign languages, gardening, and travel.

Submitted by:
Professor Yaron Danon, Ph.D.
Department of Mechanical, Aerospace, and Nuclear Engineering
Excerpts from obituary published in The Saratogian on Feb. 5, 2015
Henry James Sneck Jr., Ph.D., died on January 25, 2015. Born on November 9, 1926, in Schenectady, he was the son of Henry James Sneck and Ruth Durrell Sneck. He attended Scotia schools and graduated from Scotia High School in 1943. At 17 his parents signed for him to join the Navy, as he would soon be of draft age. He served from 1944 – 1945 in the Pacific theater of war on LST 18. Following his honorable discharge, he took a post-graduate course at Scotia High School for admission to Rensselaer. As a four-year mechanical engineering student, he was an outstanding scholar and became a member of Pi Tau Sigma, Sigma Xi, and Tau Beta Pi honorary societies. He received an M.S. in Mechanical Engineering at Yale University in 1952, and a Ph.D. from Rensselaer in 1963. He was hired to the Rensselaer faculty as an Instructor in Mechanical Engineering in 1953. His teaching career covered more than 50 years.

He received teaching awards during his many years in the classroom, where he was glad to see students grasp and learn the subject matter presented. His professional career involved consulting work with area companies such as General Electric, the Watervliet Arsenal, Norton Company, and others. He also worked as an expert witness with attorneys on court cases, which he thoroughly enjoyed. He was a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the Society of Tribologists and Lubrication Engineers. His contributions to mechanical engineering included various publications and patents and the textbook *Machine Dynamics*. His hobbies included tennis and sailing a small craft off Cape Cod, MA, a memorable vacation spot, and on local lakes. His love of classical music took him to the Troy Music Hall, Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and Tanglewood. He was happiest solving a problem, listening to a wonderful phrase of music and whistling along. He loved his cars, from the “Ghoster” to the “Tang” to the “Bimmer”; they were always convertibles.
As a visiting professor, he taught satellite courses for Hudson Valley Community College, a year at the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs in 1992, and at the United States Military Academy at West Point from 1994 – 1996. Professor Sneck loved his students, his colleagues, and staff. His sense of humor and quick repartee were part of his personality, and he loved to laugh.

Published in the Times Union on January 28, 2015.

Henry J., or Hank to his colleagues, always had his door open to all, from the struggling student to the struggling or happy colleague. Hank was never shy about trying to teach a new concept or to use a new delivery method. He was an inspiration to all when things were going well or going poorly. His love of life, great perspective, and appreciation of a fruit pie were a joy to behold.

Submitted by:
Retired Professor Stephen Derby, Ph.D.
Department of Mechanical, Aerospace, and Nuclear Engineering
Professor Burt Swersey
1937–2015

It is with great sadness that I write of the recent passing of Professor Burt Swersey, who served as a lecturer in the School of Engineering’s Department of Mechanical, Aerospace, and Nuclear Engineering for more than 25 years. Professor Swersey holds 14 U.S. patents and was the founder of Brookline Instrument Company in 1962 and American Scale Corporation in 1973. He is the recipient of several recognitions, including the 2007 Olympus Lifetime of Educational Innovation Award for his dedication to innovative thinking and his commitment to students and learning; the 2012 David M. Darrin ‘40 Counseling Award from Phalanx, the Rensselaer student leadership honor society, which recognizes a faculty member who has made an unusual contribution in the counseling of undergraduate students; and the 2014 Sustainable Practice Impact Award from the Lemelson Foundation and the National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance (NCIIA), now known as VentureWell, an award recognizing a company or an individual demonstrating outstanding achievement in developing clean technologies, implementing sustainable practices in their businesses, or providing exceptional education opportunities to university students.

Prior to joining Rensselaer, Professor Swersey was a successful innovator in the medical field. He developed a number of important inventions, including an extremely accurate scale to weigh patients, together with bed and instrumentation, revolutionizing the treatment of water loss in patients with severe burns. Throughout his career at Rensselaer, Professor Swersey taught the ideals and methods of innovation and served as a role model to students. Many of these students have made significant impacts, either as entrepreneurs or as product designers for well-established companies, accumulating patents and business plan competition awards.

Professor Swersey taught the Inventor’s Studio course, of which he was principal architect, at Rensselaer for the past 15 years. More recently, he had introduced a popular new course, How
To Change the World, which pushes students to identify and design ways in which they can use technology to economically better the lives of many around the world. Recognized by Inc.com in 2009 as among the best entrepreneurship courses in America, the Inventor’s Studio course, a semester-long capstone design experience for engineering seniors, helps students learn to identify, understand, and solve open-ended problems. Student work in the course has resulted in five patents, with several more pending. One notable project, by former Rensselaer students Eben Bayer ’07 and Gavin McIntyre ’07, became Ecovative Design, which makes biodegradable packing products for companies including Dell and Steelcase. Professor Swersey continued to work with them as a mentor and investor in the company after their graduation.

Professor Swersey pushed students to exceed their dreams, both in the classroom and in their business ventures. His ability to motivate and engage students, and his dedication to student advising, counseling, and mentoring, were unequaled. He had a passion for educating the next generation of innovators on how to identify problems and needs, and seek creative solutions so that they can have a positive impact on people’s lives.

Submitted by:
Shirley Ann Jackson, Ph.D., President
Professor of Physics, Applied Physics, and Astronomy
Professor of Engineering Sciences

Burt Swersey was dedicated to his students, and he worked tirelessly to help them grow as learners, thinkers, and doers. He instilled great values, personal and professional, helping his students to see the big picture, design the future, and always reminding them: Don’t do nonsense!

Another side of Burt Swersey was his profoundly ethical approach toward all his colleagues. He was exceptionally generous in every way. He always had time to listen if you were hurting; he was encouraging when you had an original idea, and he even offered to help bring ideas to the market. He mentored many of us in the teaching of design and innovation, enthusiastically sharing his methods and constantly striving to improve himself and Rensselaer.
Burt was a deeply caring man and thus loved by all who knew him. His unique blend of humanity, decency, and unrivaled enthusiasm for innovation and progress is sorely missed. Burt changed the world for the better, and thankfully his memory makes all whose lives he touched, better people.

Submitted by:
Professor Amir H. Hirsa, Ph.D.
Department of Mechanical, Aerospace, and Nuclear Engineering
Professor John C. Truman ’43, ‘50G
1921–2015

John C. Truman died peacefully on June 18, 2015. He was born in Oneonta, NY, on December 18, 1921, the son of Ray E and Madge Smith Truman. John was of the Christian faith. He attended Laurens High School and it was there that he met his future wife, Doris Smith. He attended and later taught at Rensselaer, where he earned an advanced degree in engineering.

John served his country as a captain in the Army Air Corps from 1942 until 1946. He taught at the Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright Patterson AFB, and was an aeronautical engineer with the General Electric Company. He was a licensed civil engineer and a Professor of Engineering and Physics at State University College at Oneonta.

John is survived by Doris, his wife of 71 years, his daughters Ann Burger, Rosemary Truman (Jim McQueen), and Priscilla Muehl (Mark), grandchildren Kathy Drapeau, Edward Burger, Jennica Whitt (Marcus), and Nathan Muehl (Valdeline), and great-grandchildren Maximus Whitt, Gregory Drapeau, and Caroline Drapeau.

Published by Bookhout Funeral Home, Oneonta, NY, June 2015.
Professor Max Laverne Yeater
1917–2014

Max Laverne Yeater, age 97, died December 26, 2014, at The Village Green in Slingerlands, NY. Max was born February 18, 1917, in Detroit to Paul Oman Yeater and Bessie Sophia Germann Yeater. Max graduated with honors from Rolla High School in Missouri in 1935. He continued his education at the Missouri School of Mines (later known as the University of Missouri at Rolla), where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering in 1939. He earned a Master’s and Ph.D. in Physics at Washington University in St. Louis. Max was deferred three times—the final time signed by President Truman himself—from serving in the war because there was a shortage of physicists. He married Virginia, the love of his life, the day they graduated in 1943. They moved across country by train to Massachusetts, where Max was employed in the Radiation Lab at MIT as part of the team that developed radar in World War II. At the end of the war in 1945, Max and Virginia moved to Scotia, NY, where Max began employment at The General Electric Research Lab on the Betatron. He then worked at the Knolls Atomic Power Lab, where Max and his partner Erwin Gaerttner were awarded a $3 million grant from the Atomic Energy Commission. They took the grant to Rensselaer, building the largest linear accelerator in the world at that time to continue research in nuclear physics. For 34 years Max was employed by Rensselaer as a Professor of Nuclear Engineering (24 years) and administrator/chairman of the Faculty Council (10 years). Max started the Nuclear Engineering Program at Rensselaer and served as advisor to Nuclear Engineering students throughout his academic career. After retiring from Rensselaer, Max was employed for three years by the NYS Department of Science and Technology, retiring for good in 1992 at the age of 75.

Submitted by:
Professor Yaron Danon, Ph.D.
Department of Mechanical, Aerospace, and Nuclear Engineering
Excerpts from obituary published in The Daily Gazette on Dec. 27, 2014
Albert Einstein said, “The value of a man should be seen in what he gives and not in what he is able to receive.” These faculty were people who gave. They gave much to their work, to their students, their fellow colleagues and their family.

They led lives that demanded notice … lives that exemplified brilliance … lives that inspired emulation … lives that burned so that others’ paths were lit.

We are deeply grateful to have known and worked with these outstanding faculty.

Members of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Faculty Senate