



Ray S. Hunter

ROY F. WESTON

1911–2007

Elected in 1976

“Leadership in the multidisciplinary approach to solving difficult waste problems involving municipal waters, industrial wastes, and solid wastes.”

BY ANASTASIA BAMIHOS
SUBMITTED BY THE NAE HOME SECRETARY

ROY F. WESTON, born in 1911, was a visionary who saw the need for sustainability decades before it became a watchword for others. Weston founded Roy F. Weston, Inc., in 1957, a leading environmental and redevelopment consulting firm, and was a major contributor to educational initiatives to address global environmental issues.

A Wisconsin native, Mr. Weston received his B.S. in civil engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1933 and his M.C.E. from New York University in 1939. He received a D.E. (Honoris Causa) from Drexel University in 1981 and an Honorary Doctor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1995. Mr. Weston was a registered professional engineer in 18 states and a diplomat of the American Academy of Environmental Engineers.

Weston was an early champion of the idea that environmental problems require multidisciplinary, rather than piecemeal, solutions. He also maintained that preventing environmental problems is preferable to the abatement or remediation and insisted that engineers in his company promote such a holistic approach in addressing their clients' environmental issues.

Weston was one of the first engineers to use environmental sustainability as a criterion for evaluating human activity and a strong advocate for a global approach to environmental

problems. A tireless promoter of environmental education, he supported many organizations and schools through personal contributions and financial donations. He donated funds to the University of Wisconsin to establish the Roy F. Weston Center for Sustainability, which focuses on defining, solving, and preventing environmental problems through rational decisions and processes. His donations also provided support for research and laboratory facilities at Drexel University. His gift to the School of Public Policy, University of Maryland, in 2004 was the largest contribution by an individual in the school's history. The gift was an endowment for the Roy F. Weston Chair in Natural Economics and start-up funds for an initiative in natural economics (the integration of fundamental, natural principles of system operation with social-science theory, modeling, and practice).

As an entrepreneur, Roy was consistently ahead of his time; he challenged the status quo and brought together natural and social sciences—all with the goal of making the world a better place. His gifts and donations helped promote research and education “the Weston way”—combining engineering with policy in the new Masters of Engineering and Public Policy Program at the University of Maryland that brings together researchers in many disciplines through the new Center for Integrative Environmental Research. Weston was a major benefactor of the Nelson Institute at the University of Wisconsin and an original member of its Board of Visitors. In 2005, he donated \$1 million to the Nelson Institute to help create two annual graduate fellowships, support the Roy F. Weston Distinguished Global Sustainability Lecture Series, and support other sustainability initiatives. This gift established the Roy Weston Program in Sustainability, which is operated by the institute's Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment, in collaboration with the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. He set aside additional monies in a trust fund earmarked for the institute as part of his estate.

Mr. Weston accrued a long list of accolades for his accomplishments, including: National Engineer of the Year by the National Society of Professional Engineers in 1973; member

of NAE in 1976; Entrepreneur of the Year, Lifetime Achievement Award by Ernst and Young, Inc., and Merrill Lynch in 1990; American Institute of Chemical Engineers Lawrence K. Cecil Award in 1993; and Technology Council of Greater Philadelphia's Legend CEO Award in 1994. He was named in the *Engineering News-Record* 125th anniversary issue, "125 Years . . . 125 Top People" in 1999. In April 2007, he was recognized as a Hall of Fame Award winner for business achievement by the Chester County, Pennsylvania, Economic Development Council.

Roy Weston took a social imperative, addressing the environmental threat to the global quality of life, and turned it into a thriving business. He was chairman of the board and CEO of Roy F. Weston, Inc. for more than 35 years until his retirement in 1991.

In June 2001, Roy F. Weston, Inc., officially changed its name to Weston Solutions, Inc. (WESTON®), and became an employee-owned company. Carrying on the legacy of Mr. Weston's vision, the company delivers integrated, sustainable solutions for environmental restoration, property redevelopment, design/build construction, green buildings and clean energy.

One of the first sanitary engineers hired by corporate America in the 1930s and a pioneer in environmental consulting, he advanced a multidisciplinary approach that has been widely copied. His vision, leadership, and generosity have made a profound impact on the world.

He is survived by his daughters, Katherine Weston Swoyer-Fittipaldi and Susan Weston Thompson, six grandchildren, and 14 great grandchildren. He was married to his high school sweetheart, Madeleen, for over 60 years until her death in 2002.

His daughter, Susan, remembers that for his 95th birthday, the family held a "Roasts and Toasts" celebration. All 125 guests, from around the country, were asked to write a thought or memory of Roy. Many were shared aloud. There were many marvelous, funny, and heartwarming stories showcasing over and over the very human, practical, and optimistic sides of the man from humble beginnings who loved to fish and hunt for food with his Dad, who started a business on a shoestring when

few people thought of the environment as a treasure to preserve and who gave opportunities to excel to thousands of employees from almost every nation.

Susan later noted that despite all the awards, tributes and accolades bestowed on him by his peers, to be so honored by his friends, employees and family, that upon her father's return home after the party he said "Now *that* was quite a day!"

Her father had been very involved in the planning of the 95th birthday party including the invitation, which read "Please join us as we gather to celebrate this milestone and look forward to when we reconvene in 2011 for "The Celebration of a Century." Unfortunately he died, surrounded by his family, barely a year after the celebration of his 95th.

