



Edward G. McLean

EDWARD GRAHAM JEFFERSON

1921–2006

Elected in 1986

“For outstanding research leadership and exceptional contributions to university-industry cooperation in science and engineering, and for creative direction of one of the world’s largest industrial organizations.”

WRITTEN BY CHARLES O. HOLLIDAY JR.
SUBMITTED BY THE NAE HOME SECRETARY

EDWARD GRAHAM JEFFERSON, retired chairman and chief executive officer of DuPont, died on February 9, 2006.

Born July 15, 1921, in London, Ed served in the British Royal Artillery during World War II and took part in the Normandy invasion in 1944. While in Normandy, he was involved in operations of the 30th Corps and the 43rd Wessex Division, including Operation Epsom and Operation Goodwood. Later, in Holland, Captain Jefferson participated in Operation Market Garden, during which American and British forces attacked across the Meuse-Escant Canal toward Eindhoven, Nijmegen, and Arnhem. In recognition of his service, Ed was awarded several campaign medals and stars and has the distinction of “Mentioned in Dispatches” by King George VI.

Ed graduated from King’s College, University of London, with first-class honors in chemistry and was awarded the Samuel Smiles Prize for Chemistry. He received a doctoral degree at King’s College. He later became a Fellow of King’s College and served as president and treasurer of Friends of King’s College. He became a citizen of the United States in 1957. He was a member of the American Philosophical Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a trustee of the Academy of Natural Sciences. In 1986, he was elected to the National Academy of Engineering.

Recruited by DuPont in 1951, Ed joined the company at the Belle Works in West Virginia and worked in a variety of locations until 1958 when he settled in Wilmington, Delaware. In 1973, he was appointed a director, senior vice president, and member of the Executive Committee. In 1978, he was given responsibility for the direction and coordination of all research and development activities for the company. On January 1, 1980, he was named president and chief operating officer, and, on May 1, 1981, he became chairman and chief executive officer. That same year, he led the DuPont acquisition of Conoco. He served on the DuPont Board of Directors from 1973 to 1992.

During his long career, Ed was co-chair of the Business Roundtable; a member of the American Section of the Society of Chemical Industry, of which he was formerly chair; vice chair of the Conference Board; a member of the President's Export Council; and a member of the U.S. Council for International Business. He was an honorary member of the Business Council and a member of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, American Chemical Society, and Directors of Industrial Research. He was a director of the Chemical Banking Corporation and its subsidiary, Chemical Bank, and a director of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. He also served on the boards of the Diamond State Telephone Company and Seagram Company Ltd.

Ed was also vice chair of the Board of Trustees of the University of Delaware, which the Jefferson family held in special regard. The family made many contributions to the school, including the donation of a pipe organ to the Edward G. and Naomi L. Jefferson Music Gallery and the establishment of a music scholarship. A chair in the Biotechnology Institute was established in Dr. Jefferson's name. Ed also contributed to higher education in a number of other ways. He was chair of the Advisory Board, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, and a member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania and of Tuskegee University. Dr. Jefferson was awarded the Chemical Industry Medal by the Society of the Chemical Industry and received a number of honorary degrees.

He was a trustee of the Dole Foundation for the Handicapped

and an honorary trustee of Winterthur Museum and Gardens, of which he had been chairman of the board. He also served as a member of the Business Committee for the Arts and the Delaware State Arts Council. He was a Senior Warden of Trinity Episcopal Church and president and Trustee Emeritus of the Delaware Art Museum.

Ed personified DuPont's emphasis on science, and his leadership and insights throughout his career helped shape the direction of the company. He was a strong supporter of research and development and provided personal leadership in biochemical and bioengineering. His accomplishments at DuPont were numerous, but he will be long remembered for recognizing the importance of biotechnology to the growth of the company and setting the company on a path toward realizing the potential of biotechnology.

On the occasion of the dedication of a life-sciences laboratory at the DuPont Experimental Station in 1984, Ed said that the company's products "in the next decade and beyond will come not just from chemistry and polymer science, but increasingly from electronics and plant and health sciences." It was his good fortune to see his prediction come true on a scale that would have startled him and his peers at the time, but which confirmed his intuitive understanding of the importance of biotechnology to DuPont in the 21st century.

Ed Jefferson will also be remembered for preserving the company's history for the benefit of future business leaders at DuPont and other companies. He was instrumental in the decision to engage academic historians of business to produce a history of DuPont research (Cambridge University Press, 1988). He gave the authors, historians David A. Hounshell and John Kenly Smith, access to all relevant company records and complete academic freedom. The result was a substantial volume that remains the essential publication about DuPont.

In a speech at the Center for the History of Chemistry—now the Chemical Heritage Foundation—in 1985, Ed said, "Without the study of corporate histories, the story of science and technology in our century will be told inadequately or not at all.... If by neglect we imply that our histories are unimportant or if we

subject them to unscholarly treatment, we then have no defense against those who would seek to diminish our achievements.”

Ed Jefferson held the achievements of his industry and his company in high regard. Everyone who knew and worked with him was greatly enriched by the experience, and the impact of his leadership will be felt at DuPont for years to come.

Dr. Jefferson is survived by his wife of 52 years, the former Naomi Nale Love of Charleston, West Virginia; son Charles David Jefferson of Charlottesville, Virginia; son Andrew McKinley Jefferson (wife, Heather D. Jefferson) of Greenville, Delaware; and four grandchildren, Peter Marion Jefferson, Charles David Jefferson Jr., Marshall Edward Jefferson, and Edward Graham Jefferson, III. Dr. Jefferson is also survived by his brother David Jefferson, and sisters-in-law Barbara, Delphine, and Bettine all of the United Kingdom. Dr. Jefferson was predeceased by his sons Edward G. Jefferson Jr., and Peter L. Jefferson.

