



ER Hough

Richard Ralston Hough

1917-1992

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Submitted By The Nae Home Secretary

RICHARD RALSTON HOUGH, whose forty-two-year career at AT&T included more than seventeen years at Bell Laboratories, died July 9, 1992. Mr. Hough, seventy-four, and his wife, Jane, seventy-three, were killed when the family's private plane crashed shortly after taking off from Concord Airport in Concord, New Hampshire. Hough made a number of significant contributions to telephony and to national defense through his work at Bell Laboratories and AT&T.

Richard Hough was a man of many talents, equally comfortable and competent in a laboratory, a boardroom, or a competitive sports setting.

A native of Trenton, New Jersey, he was graduated from Trenton High School in 1935. He received a B.S.E. degree in electrical engineering with highest honors from Princeton University in 1939. The following year he received a master of science degree in electrical engineering from Princeton. He served as a charter trustee of his alma mater for more than twenty years.

During his senior year at Princeton, Mr. Hough set several world swimming records, including two in one week. He was later elected to the Swimming Hall of Fame in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Richard Hough's professional affiliations included being named a fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). He was named Outstanding Young Electrical

Engineer by Eta Kappa Nu in 1947 and was awarded the Alexander Graham Bell Medal in 1980 by the IEEE.

Richard Hough joined Bell Telephone Laboratories in 1940, where he worked primarily on the development of various military weapon systems, including guided missiles. In 1955 he was appointed director of military electronics development and was elected vice-president of the laboratories two years later. His leadership in technology assessment, technical planning, and research helped AT&T and other large organizations respond to the demands of large, complex communications systems in both the civilian and the military government sectors. He also led the implementation of modern technologies, including communications satellites and electronic transmission and switching systems, into the U.S. telecommunications network.

Following his career at Bell Laboratories, Richard Hough moved to AT&T corporate headquarters as assistant chief engineer with broad responsibilities for the application of technology to the nationwide telephone network. In 1959 he was elected vice-president-operations of the Ohio Bell Telephone Company. Two years later he returned to AT&T as vice-president in charge of engineering, where he performed his duties until his appointment in 1966 as president of AT&T Long Lines, which was then the long-distance telephone service arm of the Bell System. He became AT&T executive vice-president in 1978, a position overseeing all Bell System engineering and network activities. He held that post until his retirement.

Richard Hough served as a consultant to the U.S. Defense Department, first as a member of the Radar Panel of the Research and Development Board, and later as a member of the Technical Panel on Electronics.

In 1961 President John F. Kennedy appointed him to head Project Beacon, a task force studying safe and efficient use of air space. He served for four years as chairman of the Technical Advisory Board to the Federal Aviation Administration. He also served as a member of the Advisory Board of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School for nine years and as a member of the Defense Science Board of the Department of Defense for three years.

Richard Hough served as director of the American Can Company (now Primerica Corporation), Alleghany Corporation, Chemical Bank, Midlantic Corporation, and other institutions. He was also past president of the Telephone Pioneers of America, the world's largest volunteer organization. He had also served as a trustee of Morristown Memorial Hospital in Morristown, New Jersey.

The Houghs were married in March 1941. They were devoted parents to six children: Suzanne H. Pedersen of Isaquaha, Washington; Richard R. Hough, Jr. of Roanoke, Virginia; Edith H. Overtree of Houston, Texas; William F. Hough of Basking Ridge, New Jersey; Dr. Jane Hough of Earlville, New York; and Robert M. Hough of Derry, New Hampshire.

During his forty-two years at AT&T, Richard Hough demonstrated the highest level of skill in technology and in business leadership. He accepted any challenge that came his way and got the job done with quiet dignity and class. He was an extremely gifted engineer whose work set standards for world-class telecommunications systems.