



George E. Holbrook

George Edward Holbrook

1909–1987

By Edward G. Jefferson

George E. Holbrook, a retired vice president and member of the Executive Committee of the Du Pont Company, died February 26, 1987, at the age of seventy-seven.

Elected one of twenty-five charter members of the National Academy of Engineering in 1964, George was an exceptionally talented chemical engineer and an executive of broad vision and foresight, who made important contributions both to Du Pont and to the many professional and educational institutions with which he was affiliated.

He joined Du Pont in 1933 at age twenty-four and before his thirtieth birthday was head of new products research at the company's Jackson Laboratory in Deepwater Point, New Jersey. He became assistant director of that laboratory in 1943, and in 1949 served as general superintendent of product development at Du Pont's Chambers Works, which was then the largest chemical plant in the world. Later he was transferred to Du Pont's home office, first as manager of process development for the company's organic chemicals business, and later as assistant director of Du Pont's Development Department.

George was given leave from Du Pont in 1952 to serve as deputy director of the Chemical, Rubber, and Forest Products Bureau of the National Production Authority, and subsequently became director of the Bureau. Upon returning to Du Pont he resumed his duties at the Development Department and under

took an additional assignment as chairman of Du Pont's Corporate Committee for Educational Fellowships and Grants, which became a lifelong interest. In 1955 he was appointed assistant general manager of Du Pont's Organic Chemicals Department, and in 1957 he became general manager of the newly created Elastomer Chemicals Department. He was named a vice-president, a director, and a member of the Executive Committee of the Du Pont Company in 1958.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1909, George attended the University of Michigan where he received a B.S. in 1931, M.S. in 1932, and Ph.D. in 1933, all in chemical engineering. In 1959 he was honored by his alma mater for outstanding career achievement, and in 1967 the university granted him the honorary doctor of science degree. Deeply concerned with the quality of higher education, George served on the Visiting Committee for the Department of Chemical Engineering at Carnegie Institution of Technology, the Board of Directors of the Development Council of the University of Michigan, the Chemical Engineering Advisory Board of the University of Rochester, the Board of Engineering Education of the University of Pennsylvania, and the Board of Overseers of Newark College.

George wrote many articles for technical publications and scientific organizations, and was issued several patents covering inventions in the organic chemicals field.

He was a member of the Tau Beta Pi, Sigma Xi, Phi Kappa Phi, and Phi Eta Sigma honor societies and the Phi Lambda Upsilon chemistry society. He was also a member of the American Chemical Society, American Physical Society, Society of Chemical Industry, New York Academy of Science, Franklin Institute, American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Chemical Society (London), an honorary member of the Institution of Chemical Engineers (London), a member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Delaware Research Foundation, and an adviser on engineering matters to the Ford Foundation.

George was a member and treasurer of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, a director in 1950–1952 and 1954–1956, and president in 1958. In 1953 he received the Institute's Profes

sional Progress Award, and in 1961 its Founders' Award for outstanding contributions to the field of chemical engineering.

In addition, he served as vice-president of the Engineers Joint Council and was for several years a member of its board of directors, its Executive Committee, and Planning Committee. He also served as a director and member of the Executive Committee of the Manufacturing Chemists' Association.

George Holbrook was a talented and dedicated professional. His contributions to human welfare were numerous and important, and he is greatly missed.