



J. Earl Frazier

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1902–1985

By J. E. Burke

John Earl Frazier, chairman of the board and treasurer of Frazier-Simplex Inc., died on January 1, 1985, in the Washington Hospital in Washington, Pennsylvania, at the age of eighty-two. Frances, his wife of forty-seven years, died in 1983.

Earl Frazier had been associated for forty-nine years with Frazier-Simplex Inc., a company founded in 1918 by his father, Chauncey Earl Frazier. Earl Frazier had built the company into a diversified organization that provided feasibility studies, supplied equipment, designed and constructed entire plants, and consulted on virtually every aspect of the glass industry with many of the glass plants in the United States and around the world. He was elected to the National Academy of Engineering in 1978.

Earl Frazier was born in Houseville, Pennsylvania, a community near Pittsburgh, on July 4, 1902, and spent his entire life in the Pittsburgh area. He graduated from Washington High School and received a B.S. in 1922 from Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, where he concurrently served as an instructor in chemistry from 1919 to 1920. Frazier received an M.S. in chemical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1924 and a D.Sc. from the University of Brazil in 1938. He was a registered professional engineer in Pennsylvania.

For several years after graduating from MIT, Earl Frazier worked as a chemical engineer at Owens-Illinois Glass Company in Clarion, Pennsylvania. He then joined Frazier-Simplex as a fuel engineer; he became president of the company in 1945 and continued as its chief executive officer until his death. While at Frazier-Simplex, he was granted, as inventor or coinventor, fifty patents in the glass technology field. As a technical leader in his company, Earl was particularly effective in advancing the use of blanket batch charges and in promoting the use of electric glass melting rather than the standard gas firing technique.

Frazier was an ardent supporter of the American Ceramic Society (ACS)—not only of its glass division but also of the society as a whole. He was always active in the society's affairs and saw it grow enormously as the field of ceramics expanded, especially over the past couple of decades. He was a fellow of the society and served in many positions, including those of treasurer (from 1968 to 1969) and president (from 1970 to 1971). ACS awarded him its John Jeppson Medal and Award in 1976 and the Albert Victor Bleininger Award in 1969 and selected him as a distinguished life member in 1972.

He is fondly remembered by many people in the society for the delightful luncheons he gave annually in Pittsburgh at the time of the Bleininger Award presentation. Each year he would introduce all of the many attendees by name and then deliver a brief summary of their accomplishments—a prodigious feat of memory.

Earl Frazier was active in many other organizations. He was chairman of the board of trustees of the Ceramic Engineering Department at the University of Illinois and was a life member of the board of trustees of Washington and Jefferson College; he was also active at Pennsylvania State University, where the Keramos-Frazier Ceramic Library was named in his honor.

In addition, Earl Frazier was active in local community affairs. At various times he served as chairman of the board of

trustees of the Washington Hospital and was president of the Washington Chamber of Commerce. He was a member of the board of trustees of the Pennsylvania Western State School, now Western Center, and served on several governing boards of other business and fraternal organizations.

Earl Frazier will be greatly missed by his many associates in the glass and ceramics professions and those in his other areas of activity as well.