



Geo. W. Kessler

George William Kessler

1908–1983

By Walter Bachman

George William Kessler retired in 1973 as vice-president for engineering and technology of the Babcock and Wilcox Company, where for many years he was a leader in advancing the art and science of steam generation in marine and stationary power plants of both the conventional and nuclear types. He died on July 25, 1983, in Winter Park, Florida.

George Kessler was born on March 1, 1908, in St. Louis, Missouri, the son of William Henry and Blanche M. (Pougher) Kessler. He graduated from the University of Illinois in 1930 with a B.S. in mechanical engineering. During his years at the university, he was a member of various honorary societies.

After graduation, Mr. Kessler was employed by Babcock and Wilcox as a student engineer and in 1932 was assigned to the company's Analytical Engineering Department in New York. He was transferred to the Marine Department in 1933 and became its head in 1938. During this period the United States was beginning to revitalize its naval and merchant fleets. From 1938 until his retirement, George Kessler was associated with every major advance in marine steam generation; in many cases, he initiated these advances.

He contributed significantly to the boiler designs that resulted in the highly efficient U.S. naval and merchant marine fleets that were indispensable to victory in World War II.

After the war, he was a leading contributor to the design of nuclear steam generators and new types of marine boilers of all kinds.

In 1946, when the nation's utilities were embarking on a vast expansion program, Kessler was transferred to the Babcock and Wilcox Stationary Department. Named to positions of increasing importance and responsibility, he made major contributions to the highly efficient steam generating plants, both conventional and nuclear, that have been so important to the economic development of the United States. During this period, he continued his interest in the marine field and actively participated in the development of boiler designs for the experimental naval destroyer programs and the early nuclear submarines, the *Nautilus* and the *Sea Wolf*. His influence on power plant design extended to a number of Western European countries and Japan.

He was appointed assistant chief engineer in 1953 and chief engineer in 1954. He was named vice-president of Babcock and Wilcox in 1961.

George Kessler was the holder of many patents. He also presented many technical papers and was the author of the chapter on boilers in the *Marks' Standard Handbook for Mechanical Engineers*. His paper on furnace explosions and their prevention, which was published in 1961, gave him wide recognition as an authority on boiler control and safety. As a result, he served on a number of technical and research committees, including those of the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the Shipbuilders Council of America, the American Standards Association, the National Academy of Sciences, the Metals Properties Council of the Engineering Foundation, and the Welding Research Council.

In 1964 he was made a fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers; he was elected to membership in the National Academy of Engineering in 1969. He was also a member of the American Society of Naval Engineers, the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers, the Propeller

Club, the Franklin Institute, and the honorary societies Tau Beta Pi, Phi Eta Sigma, Sigma Tau, and Pi Tau Sigma.

On July 28, 1951, Kessler married Alice Maxwell, who died January 26, 1973. The couple is survived by two children, Judith Kessler Green and Dr. William Clarkson Kessler, and several grandchildren.