



Ludwig A. Hinkel

LUDWIG F. LISCHER

1915–2005

Elected in 1978

“For contributions to knowledge of electric utility systems for the development of government and industry energy policy.”

BY GERALD T. HEYDT

LUD LISCHER'S office on the 37th floor of the First National Bank Building in Chicago was where many of the most important decisions of long-term energy resources and electric power transmission in the Midwest United States were made. But the background of this engineering leader was simpler and had its roots in Germany and small towns in Indiana.

Ludwig F. Lischer was born on March 1, 1915, in Darmstadt, Germany, and came with his parents Ludwig and Paula Lischer and sister Ilse to the United States in 1923. He progressed through the public school system in Michigan City, Indiana, graduating from the Michigan City High School in 1933. In view of his excellence in mathematics and science, he went on to the electrical engineering program at Purdue University, where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering in 1937. Upon leaving Purdue, he joined the Commonwealth Edison Co. in Chicago where he spent almost his entire engineering career of 43 years.

Lud had visionary thoughts of the power industry, and he was recognized at Commonwealth Edison by being appointed assistant head planning engineer in 1958, progressing to manager of technical services in 1962, and then vice president of engineering and production in 1964. In this position he headed all the electrical and mechanical engineering at Commonwealth

Edison, including transmission and distribution, power operations, and research and development. His career was interrupted during World War II when he served in the Army Signal Corps, the Army Air Corps, and the US Air Force (1941–1945), where he was promoted from first lieutenant to lieutenant colonel. He also worked for two years at Argonne National Laboratory, where he assisted in the design and initial operation of the experimental boiling water reactor II.

Lud was active in several professional societies, especially the American Institute of Electrical Engineers (AIEE). He authored technical papers on series capacitors for transmission circuits and generator stability. He was a fellow of the AIEE and later the IEEE. He served in advisory positions for the Edison Electric Institute, the Electric Research Council, the University of Illinois-Chicago Circle, Eta Kappa Nu, Tau Beta Pi, the Western Society of Engineers, American Society of Mechanical Engineers, and others. He was a cofounder of the Purdue Electric Power Center at Purdue University in 1970, where he was named a distinguished engineering alumnus in 1965 and was awarded an honorary doctorate in 1976. He was elected to the National Academy of Engineering in 1978.

Lud Lischer was best known for his service on national boards relating to energy policy. He was a founding member of the Commerce Technology Advisory Board (CTAB), and he led Project Independence (1974–1975) in preparing a roadmap for energy independence for the United States. He also was a visionary leader in the National Academy of Sciences and National Academy of Engineering for nuclear and alternative energy systems.

Lud was preceded in death by his wife Helen and his sister Ilse. He was a resident of Wheaton, Illinois. His daughter Linda is a resident of Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

