



William D. Stevens

WILLIAM D. STEVENS

1918–2007

Elected in 1983

“For major contributions in fossil and nuclear power and innovator of managerial and financial techniques for large engineering projects and organizations.”

BY ERNEST L. DAMAN

WILLIAM (Bill) D. STEVENS, retired chairman of Foster Wheeler Corp., died November 5, 2007, at his home in Livingston, New Jersey. He was born August 4, 1918, in Bayonne, New Jersey.

He received a BS in mechanical engineering from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1940, and attended the Case Institute in 1958 for a management development program. He was a member of Tau Beta Pi, Pi Tau Sigma, and Sigma Xi.

Bill joined Babcock & Wilcox Co. as a student engineer and advanced to manager proposition engineer by 1961. His tenure at B&W was interrupted in 1943 by service in the US Navy (1943–1945), where he served as engineering officer on destroyer escorts and finally as assistant material officer to the Commander Destroyers, Pacific Fleet.

In 1962 he joined the Foster Wheeler Corp. as manager of the Steam Department, progressing to executive vice president in charge of all electric utility, marine, and industrial steam generators, condensers, feed water heaters, and auxiliary equipment. In that capacity he was responsible for proposals, design, manufacturing, and construction worldwide. In 1978 he was elected chairman of the board. He retired in 1981 but continued as a director.

Bill's arrival at Foster Wheeler in 1962 coincided with a trend toward a large increase in the unit size and steam pressure of utility steam generators. Efforts to address that change

required major developments in materials, structures, heat transfer, and combustion technology as well as manufacturing processes. This is where Bill's great contributions as manager and innovator came to the fore. As a result of his efforts Foster Wheeler emerged from its position as a minor player in the supply of utility steam generators to capture a major share of that business.

His talents extended to the development of nuclear steam generators and auxiliary equipment for gas-cooled and breeder reactors and most importantly to the development of fluidized bed combustion steam generators. The latter resulted in Foster Wheeler's world leadership in that technology.

Bill was elected to the National Academy of Engineering in 1983. He was also a fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and a member of the board of overseers of the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) and the Rensselaer Council. In 1986 NJIT awarded him an honorary doctorate.

He held 20 patents and was the author of five major publications. He was a licensed professional engineer in New York, New Jersey, Florida, and Massachusetts. While living in Hackensack, New Jersey, he served on the planning board and the board of the mental health consultation center, and led the Hackensack Red Cross Fund Drive for a year.

His wife remembers that he enjoyed spending time at their home on Cape Cod and fishing and boating there. He also especially enjoyed spending time with his family. He is survived by his wife, Mary E. Stevens; his daughter Sandra A. Melin and her husband, Jeffrey N. Melin; his son-in-law Dennis J. Gallagher; his son William K. Stevens; his grandchildren Michelle M. Niemeyer, Cynthia A. Melin, David Gullo, James D. Gallagher, Michelle Gallagher, Timothy A. Gallagher, Carol Gallagher, Lisa Kerrigan, Edward Kerrigan, Jessica Stevens, William J. Stevens, Tara Stevens, Christopher Stevens; and his great-grandchildren Parker Kerrigan, Katie Kerrigan, Mason Kerrigan, Jenna Gallagher, Lauren Gullo, Mary Gullo, Andrew Gullo, and Cora Stevens. His daughter Barbara E. Gallagher is deceased.

