Richard E Balzhiser

RICHARD E. BALZHISER

1932–2012

Elected in 1994

"For leadership in the management of energy research and technological development."

BY KURT YEAGER
SUBMITTED BY THE NAE HOME SECRETARY

RICHARD E. BALZHISER, energy technology leader and former CEO of the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), died on December 23, 2012, at the age of 80 after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease.

Dick was born and raised in Wheaton, Illinois, where he was an outstanding student and a star athlete at Wheaton High School. He continued to excel in both the classroom and on the football field at the University of Michigan, where he received BS and PhD degrees in chemical engineering and an MS in nuclear engineering. In 1952 he became the university's first football player to earn first-team academic all-American honors, and two years later he was awarded the Big Ten Medal of Honor for his accomplishments in the classroom and on the football field. A brilliant and ambitious student, Dick graduated at the top of his engineering class.

Motivated by both a desire to give back to the university and an interest in public service, Dick joined the Michigan University Chemical Engineering Department in 1961 and became chair in 1970. He was also twice elected to the Ann Arbor City Council and was named an outstanding young leader in the state of Michigan. In 1967, he was selected as a White House Fellow; he served as an assistant to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and participated in a number

of important assignments, including a comprehensive assessment of the nation's commitment to the Vietnam War that came to be known as the Pentagon Papers.

From 1971 to 1973 Dick was assistant director in the White House Office of Science and Technology, responsible for energy, environment, and natural resources. Under President Nixon, he directed a comprehensive study of energy technology following the first Energy Message. His leadership of these early deliberations led to the creation of the Federal Energy Administration, the Energy Research and Development Administration, and, later, the Department of Energy. He also chaired the US Energy Technology Committee that opened relations with the USSR in 1972–1973.

While serving in the Office of Science and Technology, Dick met Chauncey Starr, the commercial nuclear technology innovation leader who answered the call from Congress to create EPRI, an independent research and development organization, in 1972. Dick was very inspired by Dr. Starr, EPRI's first president, and the challenges and opportunities that the institute presented as the nonprofit public service organization managing a $500+ million/year collaborative research and development program on behalf of electric utilities nationwide and around the world.

Dr. Balzhiser joined EPRI in 1973 as the first technical director of the Fossil Fuels and Advanced Systems Division, and he and his family moved to Menlo Park, California, shortly thereafter. He then very effectively launched and developed EPRI's advanced fossil fuels electricity generation and environmental control development programs. Throughout his EPRI career, he recruited and inspired outstanding experts who made the institute a widely recognized world leader in electricity R&D. He became EPRI's vice president of research and development in 1979, executive vice president in 1987, and president in 1988. His tenure in this position coincided with a time of major pressure on EPRI due to federal and state electric utility policy and regulatory actions. He did an excellent job of maintaining EPRI's R&D leadership and funding during this difficult period, and actually grew its membership to include

over 90 percent of the electricity generated and sold in the United States and in more than 30 countries worldwide.

After retiring from EPRI in 1996, Dick remained active as president emeritus while serving on the boards of Reliant Energy, Aerospace, Electrosource, and Nexant. Throughout his career he served on numerous scientific and technical advisory boards for government agencies, the National Academies, and universities; these included the National Academy of Sciences Academy-Industry Program, the University of Michigan College of Engineering National Advisory Committee, the Department of Energy's Energy Research Advisory Board, the Energy Systems and Policy Editorial Board, and the Forum for Applied Research and Public Policy Editorial Board. He was also a director of Houston Industries Inc. and trustee of the Aerospace Corp.

In addition, Dr. Balzhiser continued to serve as an expert on energy studies requested by the White House for the Presidential Committee of Science and Technology. And he was a member of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution advisory board, the University of Texas at Austin Natural Sciences Foundation advisory council, the technical advisory board of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Energy Laboratory, the board of directors of the US Energy Association, the Council of Consortia CEOs, the Council on Competitiveness, and the Conference Board. He chaired the World Bank's Energy Technology Steering Committee in 1998–2001.

Dick received the University of Michigan Chemical Engineering Inaugural Alumni Society Merit Award in 1992 and in 1994 was elected to the National Academy of Engineering. In 1995, he was selected for the Eminent Engineer Award by Tau Beta Pi, the Engineering Honor Society, and the Bay Area Engineering Council. In 2002 he was inducted into the Verizon CoSIDA Academic All-America Hall of Fame, in a ceremony at the New York Hilton Hotel, to recognize his "accomplishments in academics, athletics, professional career, and community service." This was a particularly memorable event for him, his wife Christine (who sadly passed away in

2007), and his children and grandchildren who were able to attend and share in the recognition. Finally, he was honored to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award from the University of Michigan for his distinguished contributions both to the university and to society at large.

He authored two prominent text books on thermodynamics, spoke and lectured frequently to utilities, universities, and public groups, and wrote numerous technical and policy papers on energy-related subjects. He is featured in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in Science and Technology.*

Even after the onset of Alzheimer's disease, Dick remained quite active for some time and continued to play golf with close friends and former colleagues.

He is survived by daughters Michele and Patti, sons Bob and Gary, grandchildren Jeffrey, Kristin, Gregory, Lacey, Lindsey, and Megan, and great-grandson Brayden. His love and commitment to family will be remembered by all of them. A memorial service was held on January 22, 2013, at the Valley Presbyterian Church in Portola Valley, California, where many of Dick's personal and professional friends honored him and gave his family their deepest sympathy.