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E. MONTFORD FUCIK

1914–2010

Elected in 1974

*“For leadership in the development of soil mechanics, water resources,
and hydroelectric engineering.”*

BY ALAN KRAUSE

SUBMITTED BY THE NAE HOME SECRETARY

E. MONTFORD (ED) FUCIK, a dedicated leader in the water industry and former chairman and president of Harza Engineering Company, died on April 6, 2010, at the age of 96.

Ed was born in Chicago in 1914 to Edward James and Agnes Montford Fucik. He received a BS in civil engineering from Princeton University in 1935, graduating Phi Beta Kappa, and an MS in engineering from Harvard University in 1937. He met Leroy Harza in 1936, while he was at Harvard. They first worked together on the Santee-Cooper project near Charleston, South Carolina. During World War II Ed served proudly in the US Navy in the Panama Canal Zone, retiring with the rank of lieutenant commander.

After World War II he and Harza formed a partnership, handwritten on a sheet of paper, that became the Harza Engineering Company, a Chicago-based energy, water, and infrastructure company. This was the start of their joint lifelong commitment to the private practice of civil engineering. Ed worked at Harza Engineering (now MWH Global) from 1945 on, and was president and chair of the organization in 1963–1979.

He was proud that the top managers and administrators at Harza were also its principal technical consultants. He said, “We never thought, ‘That hasn’t been done before so

we'd better not consider it.' We were always looking for new ideas, better ways to do things, and we were willing to take responsibility for making those ideas work. It's one thing to have a good idea; it's another thing to make it work. Engineers have to do both—think and act."

Throughout his career, Ed was esteemed by the engineering industry. He served as vice president and president of the Chicago post of the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) and as national director of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), and was elected to the National Academy of Engineering in 1974 "for leadership in the development of soil mechanics, water resources, and hydroelectric engineering." In 1976 he was named ASCE Civil Engineer of the Year (Illinois Section), and in 1979 he was awarded both the prestigious Goethals Medal from SAME for distinguished performance in the field of engineering, design, or construction and ASCE's Rickey Medal for meritorious contributions to the science and progress of hydroelectric engineering. In 1953 he won ASCE's Thomas Fitch Rowland Prize for papers that provide valuable contributions to construction engineering. He belonged to the Western Society of Engineers, the National Society of Professional Engineers, the Consulting Engineers Council, and the United States Committee on Large Dams.

Ed worked on some of the largest and most important dam, hydropower, and water resource projects in the world, such as the Bath County Pumped Storage project in Virginia; the Wanapum, Priest Rapids, and Mossyrock Dams in Washington; and the Tarbela/Mangla Spillway in Pakistan. He was intimately involved with the planning, design, and construction of the Guri Hydroelectric Project in Venezuela from the late 1950s to the completion of the final-stage dam raising and expansion in 1983, including eight years on the Engineering Board of Consultants. He was also involved in Chicago's Deep Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) and the Rayburn Outlet Works and Powerhouse for the US Army Corps of Engineers. He served as chief geotechnical engineer for the Panama Canal, where he directed studies of new locks to be built in the event of a war action against the Canal.

Fortunately, the threat never materialized, but the unfinished “third locks excavation” can still be seen, although it is slowly being erased as the MWH-designed Panama Canal Expansion Project is constructed.

Ed’s dedication and leadership led to Harza Engineering’s emergence as an internationally preeminent engineering firm. His legacy lives on in some of the largest, most complex wet infrastructure projects in the world and his loss is felt by the entire engineering community.

Ed Fucik is survived by his beloved wife of 67 years, Margaret Reinig Fucik, and by daughters Margaret A. Fucik (Steve Praissman), Jane Fucik Allendorph (George), and daughter-in-law Susan S. Fucik; grandchildren Carolyn Fucik Wilkerson, Jennifer Fucik Slota (Ben), Kathryn C. Fucik, G.P. Allendorph, and Margaret Allendorph Hoover (Alex); and six great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his son Edward M. Fucik Jr. and his brother and sister-in-law, Frank M. and Ruth F. Fucik.