P. GUNNAR ENGSTRÖM

1923–2015

Elected in 1992

"For international leadership in electric power transmission techniques and appreciation of power electronic equipment in electric utility systems."

BY HANS G. FORSBERG

PER GUNNAR ENGSTRÖM died July 20, 2015, at age 92 in Västerås. He was born April 11, 1923, in the Swedish town of Ludvika, where his father was a foreman at a local electrical company, later acquired by ASEA, a leading manufacturer of electrical goods.

Gunnar enrolled as a student of electrical engineering in KTH, the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, where he received his master certificate in 1948.

He spent his entire career at ASEA. He first joined a research group devoted to new applications of high-voltage currents under the leadership of Uno Lamm, and was soon promoted to leading positions. He obtained several patents and published articles in Swedish and international journals.

Most of his activities were related to high-voltage direct currents (HVDC), an area in which he earned international recognition. His first success was with tyristor-guided train engines, used in Scandinavia and exported to the United States. Under his leadership HVDC cables were installed for underwater transmission between Scandinavian countries and the New Zealand islands, and to connect foreign AC electric grids.

He was promoted to executive vice president and became responsible for the ASEA (later ABB-ASEA) divisions of

electronic control equipment and robotics. He proved to be an inspiring manager of technology, even outside his own field of HVDC.

He was elected to the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences (IVA) in 1967, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in 1976, and as a foreign associate of the US National Academy of Engineering in 1992. He received an honorary doctorate from the University of Uppsala in 1983.

He was deputy chair of IVA (1984–86) and very active in its Division II, Electrical Engineering, for many years, serving as chair and member of many committees. After retirement he chaired the extensive IVA program on Management of Technological Change. He was also an active supporter of the use of nuclear power, for both safety and climate reasons.

In 1983 ABB honored him by establishing the Gunnar Engström ABB Foundation, which aims to stimulate interest in energy technology research by awarding scholarships to a final PhD student project in the field of energy engineering at a Swedish technical college or university.

Gunnar Engström is survived by Gertrud, his wife of 67 years, and their children Per, Ingalill, and Kerstin with families.