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January 7, 1929 - February 7, 2017

Life Legacy

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FACTS

Born: January 7, 1929

Death: February 7, 2017

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Life Legacy

Dale Compton, 88 of West Lafayette, died at 12:25 PM Tuesday February 7, 2017 at Westminster Village. Dale was born in Chrisman, Illinois, to Roy and Marcia Compton, earned his bachelor's degree in physics from Wabash College in 1949 and his master's in physics from the University of Oklahoma in 1951. He met Jeanne at the University of Oklahoma, and they were married in 1951. He began his professional career as a research physicist at the U.S. Naval Ordnance Test Station at China Lake, California. In 1952, he entered the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), where he received a Ph.D. in experimental condensed-matter physics in 1955. After leaving UIUC, he continued his research at the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C. In 1961, Dr. Compton returned to UIUC as an associate professor of physics. He was promoted to full professor in 1964 and the following year was appointed director of the Coordinated Sciences Laboratory (CSL), which he built into a world-class organization working on control, computer, and communication systems. Under his leadership, CSL developed theories and created landmark inventions that were years ahead of their time. In 1970, Dr. Compton became director of the Chemical and Physical Sciences Laboratory at Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, Michigan. He was named executive director for research in 1972, and, from 1973 to 1986, was Ford's vice president of research. During his tenure at the company, he promoted innovations in modeling and simulation of the design and manufacture of automotive components and systems and established a balance between near-term and long-term research that led to a succession of technological breakthroughs that enabled Ford to develop superior products and produce them successfully worldwide. From 1986 to 1988, as the first Senior Fellow at NAE, Dr. Compton focused his efforts on issues related to industry and engineering education. During this time, he also edited the NAE report, Design and Analysis of Integrated Manufacturing Systems. In 1988, he became the Lillian M. Gilbreth Distinguished Professor of Industrial Engineering at Purdue University. Since that time, he has helped oversee the Center for Cooperative Manufacturing at Purdue and conducted research on unit processes in manufacturing to increase the productivity and improve the quality of manufacturing systems. From 1988 to 2000, he was interim head of the School of Industrial Engineering. Dr. Compton's research interests include materials science, automotive engineering, combustion engineering, materials engineering, manufacturing engineering, and management of technology. His work was focused on how the introduction of new technology in the semiconductor and telecommunications industries has changed over time. He has published many papers on solid-state physics and is the author, contributor, or editor of more than 85 publications, and with his team in Industrial Engineering at Purdue has registered 13 Patents. An expert in the management of technology and industrial competitiveness, Dr. Compton developed and initiated the National Science Foundation program to establish national research centers. These on-campus centers have produced a steady stream of technologies that have led to fundamental changes in manufacturing tin the United States. He chaired the NAE committee that produced Guidelines for Engineering Research Centers and was senior advisor to the NAE Engineering Research Centers and was senior advisor to the NAE Engineering Research Centers Assessment Committee. Dr. Compton has been an active participant in many NAE and National Research Council (NRC) activities. He was an NAE councilor from 1990 through 1996. He has also chaired the NRC Commission on Engineering and Technical Systems, the NAE Membership Policy Committee, the NAE Committee on Foundations of Manufacturing, and co-chaired the joint Committee on the Future of Personal Transport in China. At various times, he has also been a member of the NAE Nominating Committee, NAE Program Development Committee, National Academy of Sciences-NAE Manufacturing Forum, NRC Board on Manufacturing and Engineering Design, and NRC Report Review Committee. Dr. Compton was elected a member of NAE in 1981 for "exceptional leadership in developing advanced automotive technologies, individual achievements in engineering physics, and innovative contribution in promoting university-industry relations. He is also a member of the Research Society of America, Phi Beta Kappa, and Delta Tau Delta and a fellow of the American Physical Society, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Engineering Society of Detroit, Society of Automotive Engineers, Washington Academy of Sciences, and the IC2 Institute of the University of Texas at Austin. In addition to his service to the National Academies, Dr. Compton served on the board of governors for the Argonne National Laboratory, the advisory board for Sandia National Laboratories Combustion Research Facility, and the industrial committees for the University of Michigan and Ohio State University, as well as a member of the Technical Advisory Committee for Cummins Engine Co (1999). He was also a member of the Governing Board of the National Research Council (1997) and a member of St. Vincent Hospital (Indianapolis) Quality Committee of the Board of Directors. Among his many honors and awards are the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory Commendation (1961), an honorary doctorate of engineering from Michigan Technological University (1976), the Science Trailblazers Award from the Detroit Science Center and the Michigan Sesquicentennial Commission (1986), and the M. Eugene Merchant Manufacturing Medal from the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and society of manufacturing engineers in recognition of his lifelong commitment to manufacturing excellence (1999). In 2003, he received a UIUC Alumni Award for Distinguished Service for "substantive research achievements in unraveling the behavior of defects and color centers in solids, exceptional leadership in engineering practice and management, and enduring contributions to engineering education." He was the recipient of the 2014 George E. Pake Prize "For exemplary leadership of corporate automotive R&D at a critical time for the industry and for important individual achievements in experimental solid state physics". During his tenure as Home Secretary, Dr. Compton championed NAE program activities aimed at bringing engineering applications and research to bear on cost, quality, and safety challenges facing the U.S. health care system. He co-chaired the joint NAE/Institute of Medicine (IOM) study committee on Engineering and the Health Care System, which produced the influential 2005 report, Building a Better Delivery System: A New Engineering/Health Care Partnership. The report recommended public- and private sector actions to advance the development, adaptation, and use of systems engineering tools in the health care sector. Dale played a leading role in shaping the university's successful bid to establish the Purdue Regenstrief Center for Healthcare Engineering in 2005. Both at the National Academies and Purdue, Dale continued to promote collaboration between engineers and health professionals to improve the quality and productivity of American health care. Surviving are his three children, a daughter, Gayle Prete (husband James) of Chicago, IL and two sons, Donald Compton (wife Mary Gail) of Tallahassee, FL, and Duane Compton (wife Janie Dvorak) of Lyme, NH. He is also survived by two grandchildren, Mary Rose and Harrison Compton. A visitation will be held Friday, February 10, 2017 from 5-8PM and a service on Saturday, February 11, 2017 at 10:00 at the Soller-Baker West Lafayette Chapel, 1184 Sagamore Pkwy W, West Lafayette, IN 47906. Burial services will follow the funeral service in Chrisman, IL at Hoult Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to National Academy of Engineering. <https://www8.nationalacademies.org/academygiving/academygiving.aspx?style=nae> Radka Nebesky, Office of Development, National Academy of Engineering, 500 Fifth Street, NW, NAS 048 Washington, DC 20001, 202-334-3417.

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