In Memoriam

Richard E. Merwin
(1922–1981)

On August 28, 1981 Richard E. Merwin, a former Senior Editor of the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON COMPUTERS, died in Washington, DC, from cardiac arrest. At the time of his death he was President of the IEEE Computer Society.

Dick’s long involvement with the computer field started shortly after receiving his B.S.E.E. degree in 1943 from the University of Pennsylvania. He was employed by the Moore School of Engineering to work on ENIAC, the first electronic computer built in the United States. Later, he became a Research Associate at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory where he organized the engineering team for MANIAC, another pioneering effort in the computer field. At IBM, which he joined in 1951, he was active in the development of the 702 and 705 systems and was Engineering Manager of the Stretch program. The design of the Stretch computer pushed the technology of the late 1950’s to its limit and exerted a major influence on the IBM 7090, that company’s second generation of machines. He went on to receive the M.S.E.E. degree from Syracuse University in 1960 and the Ph.D. degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1965. Subsequently joining the U.S. Army Ballistic Missile Defense Program Office, he served as Deputy Director for Data Processing until 1977 when he became a full-time Research Professor at George Washington University.

As a long time active member of the Computer Society, IEEE, and the Association for Computing Machinery, Dick held a variety of leadership positions. He was the Senior Editor of the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON COMPUTERS from 1974 to 1978 and Vice President of the Computer Society for Publications from 1978 to 1980. He became President of the Computer Society in January 1981 and was the nominee for a second term at the time of his death. He also took an active part in the organization and operation of a number of major conferences including COMPCON, COMPSAC, and the Joint Computer Society/ACM MICRO Conference. As the Computer Society representative to AFIPS he also played a very important role in the growth of NCC and other AFIPS activities.

During his career Dick received a number of major awards. He was an IBM Academic Fellow from 1961 to 1965 and received the ACM Recognition Service Award 1971–1973. In 1975 he was elected a Fellow of the IEEE in recognition for his contributions to the development of ferrite core memories and computer hardware and software programs. As an active researcher he continually sought out new areas of interest. His current research activities included research projects in the area of microprogramming, software management, and distributed data processing.

Those of us who had the opportunity of working with Dick will always remember his kindness, encouragement, and advice. His friendliness and kind words often were enough to mold a group of strong willed individuals into a smoothly working team.

A memorial fund is being established in Dick’s name by the IEEE Computer Society to support research and education in the field of Computer Science and Engineering. Those who wish to make donations to the Richard E. Merwin Memorial Fund should make checks payable to the IEEE Computer Society, P.O. Box 639, Silver Spring, MD 20901.

Taylor L. Booth
Senior Editor