

Walter Roy Jones

August 9, 1902 — March 8, 1954

Walter Roy Jones, Professor of Electrical Engineering, was born in Ossining, New York. His early schooling was in Poughkeepsie and led directly to Cornell where he entered in 1921. The characteristics of the man which were to profoundly influence his later life were apparent in his undergraduate activities. Small of physical stature, he was coxswain of Cornell crews for two years. Completely self supporting as an undergraduate, his tremendous vitality and driving energy were noted by the faculty long before graduation. He received the E. E. degree in 1925.

First activity after graduation was a short stay with Western Union Telegraph Company, in Buffalo, New York. Always interested in radio engineering he found the Federal Radio Corporation of Buffalo more to his liking, and by 1929 he had become engineer in charge of development and research. When it became apparent that the company would not survive he left, taking with him two of his best men to positions in Sylvania Electric Products Inc. where he spent several years traveling extensively as commercial engineer. In the course of these travels he built a large circle of friends including engineering executives of most of the radio equipment manufacturers of the nation. These contacts were to serve him well later at Cornell. He also developed a unique style of addressing technical meetings, which placed him in great demand as a speaker, particularly at radio technician's gatherings. While at Sylvania he kept up his interest and contacts as a Cornell alumnus. He was at his best entertaining a class of Cornell engineers visiting the Sylvania tube factory in Emporium, Pennsylvania. Starting in the early 1930's such trips became annual affairs for students majoring in communications and electronics. In his 19-year stay with Sylvania, Walter Jones rose to the position of chief engineer of the radio tube division.

Professor Jones received his first appointment to the Cornell Faculty as Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering in 1948, and in 1951 he was made Professor of Electrical Engineering.

Professor Jones' activities while on the Cornell faculty went far beyond routine teaching. Shortly after his appointment he was made coordinator of research for the School of Electrical Engineering. His very considerable managerial talents and nationwide contacts led to rapid expansions of his two favorite projects, the vacuum tube laboratory and sponsored research in vacuum tubes. His friends in industry donated substantial quantities of equipment helping him to bring the vacuum tube laboratory from a small corner in a basement room to one of the best of college laboratories in the country. In the field of sponsored research Professor Jones brought to Cornell several contracts. One in particular is concerned with evaluation of vacuum tubes in government and industrial

service and involves the testing and analysis of thousands of tubes which have failed in service. This project is large enough to require the services of a full time staff, and offers valuable and instructive employment to a number of engineering students, both graduate and undergraduate.

Outside of the University, Professor Jones gave prodigally of his time and ability to his church, fraternity, and community. Always interested in young people, he was superintendent of youth activities for the Methodist Church of Ithaca. Before coming to Ithaca he was president of the Elk Lick Council, Boy Scouts of America, and received the Silver Beaver Award for distinguished service from this organization. Long a member of the Masonic order, he attained the 32nd degree in the Scottish Rite, and was at the time of his death adviser to the Order of the Rainbow. His membership in honorary and technical societies included Eta Kappa Nu, Sigma Xi, Institute of Radio Engineers, American Institute of Electrical Engineers in which he was chairman of the Ithaca Section, Radio Club of America of which he was a Fellow, and the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers.

His untimely death at the age of 51 years terminated a rich and colorful career just approaching a climax of achievement and value to the University community. The personal loss felt by his colleagues and the many students who sought his help and advice is profound.

C. W. Gartlein, True McLean, B. K. Northrop