

Everett M. Strong

January 23, 1900 — September 23, 1988

Everett Milton Strong was born on January 23, 1900, in Portland, Maine. After prep school work at Yarmouth Academy, he attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering in 1922. After graduation he was employed by the General Electric Company at their National Lamp Works in Cleveland, Ohio, as an illumination engineer until September 1924, when he became an instructor in electrical engineering at Cornell. He became an assistant professor in 1929, an associate professor in 1941, and a professor in 1944. He was appointed professor emeritus upon his retirement on June 30, 1967.

From his first appointment Everett was concerned with the teaching of electrical fundamentals to beginning students. He soon found that no existing tests were suitable for what he wanted to teach in the way that he wanted to teach it, and he therefore began the production of a mimeographed text. After a number of revisions, incorporating the ideas of his students and his colleagues, the work resulted in the text *Electrical Engineering—Basic Analysis*, published by John Wiley in 1943.

Everett was an excellent teacher who was well remembered by returning alumni long after his retirement. They remembered that his problems were engineering oriented and relied on a knowledge of the basic sciences studied before his course. They felt that his teaching gave them excellent preparation for the courses to follow. They also remembered his sense of humor and his use of the pun—he was a master punster who would spring one at any opportunity.

Everett's research was concerned with illumination, and he was a consultant on this subject for a number of companies and individuals. His expertise was recognized when he was elected national president of the Illuminating Engineering Society for 1952-53. He received the Gold Medal of that society in 1966 and its Distinguished Service Medal in 1967. He was a contributing member of many Illuminating Engineering Society technical committees, as well as those of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, and was honored as a Fellow in both organizations. He was an early member of the American Society for Engineering Education and was chairman of its Electrical Engineering Division in 1951.

Everett demonstrated his administrative abilities in 1943-45 when, upon the resignation of Director Lewis, he was appointed chairman of a three-man committee consisting of himself and Professors Ballard and Burckmyer to

be interim caretakers of the school. A number of his colleagues thought he should be appointed to the director's position, but the administration had other ideas. In the light of what he did for the school subsequently, it was probably just as well.

In 1947 Everett started an Engineering Cooperative Program that was unlike any existing at that time and which he headed until his retirement in 1967. In other co-op programs students spent alternating periods in industry and in school, the purpose of the industry periods being to earn money for the school periods, that is, the industry periods were not related to the students' education in any other way. The industry periods were in companies in the same general area as the school, and often each period was the same as the preceding.

In Everett's program the student spent three periods in industry—a summer, fall, and spring, but not consecutively—and went to school the remainder of the time, graduating at the normal time. (Cornell was on the five-year plan when the program was started.) In the beginning, students from electrical engineering and mechanical engineering were in the program,

Many aspects of his program were unusual, and the whole idea received much attention from educational colleagues in other universities and colleges. However, Everett had to work hard and long for 20 years to make the program the success it was.

First, the students were selected for the program by the industrial sponsors they were going to work for—after an interviewing process similar to that which they would undergo when applying for a job after graduation. Everett had to work out the interviewing arrangements.

Just getting the sponsors took a lot of time and effort. They had to be sought out by Everett and convinced that they should participate. The nature of their participation was primarily financial—they were to contribute to the student's tuition, his salary while working for them, and to the school and college for the faculty salaries during the two summer school terms that were a part of the program. However, they also had to work out industrial assignments that would develop the student's abilities progressively through the three industrial periods (an important feature of the program).

Second, Everett had to convince reluctant faculty that they should work on the programs in those two summers. Even though they were to be paid at better than their normal rate, they weren't inclined to give up their summers. Younger faculty members resisted because they couldn't see getting any stars in their crown when it came to promotion time.

Third, as part of the program, Everett visited every student to make certain the student was getting the education that was the purpose of the program. This entailed considerable travel since students were scattered throughout the Northeast. It was said that Everett knew all of the airline schedules for that area by heart, and that if you were at the local airport when the last flight came, in the odds were very good that Everett would be on it.

Everett did all he did for a long time supposedly on a half-time assignment—he continued to teach the basic course and supervise the staff assigned to it. He also did all he did because of his loyalty to Cornell. On this assignment he was certainly overworked and underpaid—but it was something he undertook himself—and Cornell benefited.

Along the way Everett was inducted into the honoraries Tau Beta Pi, Eta Kappa Nu, and Sigma Xi. He was a licensed professional engineer, and his name is included in *The American Men of Science*, *Who's Who in America*, and the *World Biography*.

Everett's recreation, like his close friend and contemporary Burckmyer's, was his boat. His was a cabin cruiser, appropriately named the Seabattic, while Burck's was a sailboat. They often good-naturedly argued the merits of each.

Everett was very active in the Ithaca Yacht Club and at one time was its Commodore. He also was Commander of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the Power Squadron and taught courses in piloting and navigation for both organizations. Related to his experience in yachting and his technical background was his appointment as the U.S. delegate to the Hague International Conference on Maritime VHF Radio Telephony in January, 1957.

Everett was a loyal parishioner of the First Congregational Church and was a contributing member in ways other than financial—ranging from firing the furnace on a cold Sunday morning to installing an individual hearing-aid- type sound system for the hearing impaired.

Everett was survived by his wife of 62 years, Ella Sheffield Strong, who died on April 30, 1989. They are survived by sons Robert Strong of El Toro, California, and Walter Strong of New Orleans, Louisiana; a daughter, Ruth Ann Johnson of Bowdoinham, Maine; thirteen grandchildren; and ten great-grandchildren.

Paul D. Ankrum, Robert E. Osborn, William H. Erickson