

# George Robert McDermott

Professor of Naval Architecture

*1860 — May 26, 1937*

Professor Emeritus George Robert McDermott, who for many years taught Naval Architecture in the College of Engineering, Cornell University, passed away on May 26, 1937.

Professor McDermott was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1860. He received his engineering education in the Andersonian Institute of Glasgow, then entered the employ of the famous Clydebank Shipbuilding and Engineering Company, where the Queen Mary and many other famous ships have been constructed, rising to the position of Naval Architect and Assistant to the Shipyard Manager. In 1890 he joined the Southampton Naval Works as Naval Architect and Assistant to the General Manager. He came to Cornell in 1891 as Assistant Professor of Naval Architecture, and was promoted to full professorship in 1904. From that date until his retirement in 1929 he was in charge of the work in Naval Architecture in the College of Engineering at Cornell.

Professor McDermott was much in demand as a consulting engineer, the Cunard and other steamship lines calling upon him frequently for advice. During the years 1910-12, while on leave of absence from the University, he was appointed by the Brazilian Government as Engineer-in-chief in the organization and construction of the Naval Repair Station of Lloyd Brasileiro at Ilka de Mucangue, Rio de Janeiro. Again on leave from the University in 1917, he was appointed by General George W. Goethals as District Officer of the U. S. Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation and afterwards was appointed by Chairman E. N. Hurley as District Officer of the Corporation, which position he filled until the end of the World War.

He was always very active in the broader aspects of naval work and was recognized as an authority in such matters. In 1921 he was appointed by the United States Government as Chairman of the Government Commission on Loadlines of Mercantile Vessels for the Atlantic and Gulf Division, and he was a member of many committees interested in Marine problems. He was a member of the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers, of Sigma Xi and Tau Beta Pi, and he was the author of many papers and several books in his field, notably, the "Screw Propeller Computer" and "Textbook on Screw Propellers."

Professor McDermott was a most excellent teacher. His own scientific background was thorough and he had no patience with weak or slipshod methods of instruction. He was a thorough believer in instilling what he always described as the "fundamentals" into the minds of his students. Yet his vigorous lectures and his rigid

classroom instruction were tempered with rare humor and a winning smile. Those who elected his work were always enthusiastic over it and the success of his students bears witness to the soundness of his methods. He was a sociable man, widely informed, honest, upright, and lovable. He will be missed by a host of friends.'

*Source: Fac. Rec, pps. 1607, 2008 Resolutions of the Trustees and Faculty of Cornell University, November, Nineteen Hundred And Thirty-Seven*