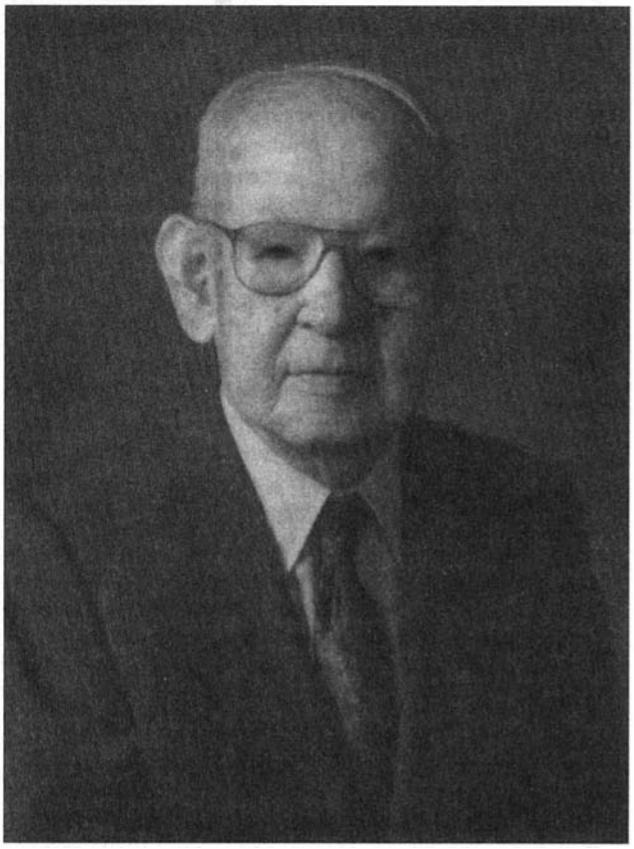
Yasundo Takahashi
1912–1996



Yasundo Takahashi, Professor Emeritus of Mechanical Engineering at the University of California at Berkeley, died of cancer at his home in Kensington, California, on October 29, 1996. He was a pioneer in development of methods for applying the newly emerging field of automatic control systems to mechanical engineering. During his 22 year tenure as a Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Berkeley (1957 until his retirement in 1979) he worked tirelessly at developing new control methodology and adapting contemporary research results to control system curricula. He was the primary author of an early influential text on the subject (*Control and Dynamic Systems*, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1970, with M. Rabins and D. Auslander). In total, he is author or co-author of six books, two in English and four in Japanese.

He came to Berkeley from the University of Tokyo, where he had been teaching since 1944, via a Fulbright appointment at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. At that time, he had been studying the control of heat exchangers, ubiquitous components in a wide variety of industrial applications, and was world-renowned for this work.

Professor Takahashi also extended his activity to the national and international professional domain. He was instrumental in bringing The American Society of Mechanical Engineers' (ASME) Automatic Controls Division (as it was then called) from its earlier focus on process control (and nearly inactive status) to a broad orientation reflected in its current name, Dynamic Systems and Control Division. He helped to found the ASME transactions journal in this field, *Journal of Dynamic Systems, Measurement, and Control* and was its second editor-in-chief.

Subsequent to his retirement from Berkeley, Professor Takahashi served on the faculty of the Toyohashi University of Technology and Science in Nagoya, Japan where he was involved in the development of programs in control system education and in international programs. He returned to the United States after three years at Toyohashi University to become senior technical consultant for the Mikuni/Berkeley Research and Development Corporation, a position he held until his death. While there, he worked on automotive control systems and control system software. His work at the Mikuni/Berkeley laboratory also coincided with his increased interest in international electronic communications. He established a broad network of email correspondents on technical, political and social issues, and worked on world-wide web publishing as well.

Born in Nagoya-shi, Japan in 1912, he graduated from Tokyo Imperial University (now the University of Tokyo) in 1935 and returned to finish his doctorate in mechanical engineering in 1946. In the interim, he served as an assistant design engineer with the Japanese Government Railways (1935–37) and as a professor at Yokohama Technical College and Nagoya Imperial University.

The value of Professor Takahashi's work has been recognized all over the world. The American Society of Mechanical Engineers has awarded him three of its highest honors: Life Fellow, Calvin Rice Lecturer, and the Oldenburger Medal. The citation for the Oldenburger Medal reads: "in recognition of his attainments in applying the science and technology of automatic control." It is awarded for career accomplishments of those control engineering professionals who have had the most impact on the field. He is an honorary member of the Japan Society of Mechanical Engineers and he received the first Koseki-Sho (lifetime achievement award) from Japan Society of Instrument and Control Engineers. He received an honorary doctorate from the University of Grenoble in France and was awarded the Berkeley Citation on his retirement from active service on the University of California faculty.

In 1994 he received one of Japan's most prestigious awards from Japanese Emperor Akihito, the "Third Class Order of the Sacred Treasure," given to Japanese and Japanese-Americans to honor a lifetime of achievements. Toyohashi University, where he served as a professor from 1978 to 1981, initiated the action recommending the award.

In keeping with his international bent, Professor Takahashi has served as visiting professor at MIT, the University of Grenoble (France), the Institute for Advanced Studies of the National Polytechnic Institute of Mexico, Keio University (Japan), the University of Tokyo, and the University of La Plata (Argentina).

He is survived by his wife, Kuwako, his son-in-law James Earle Canfield and granddaughter Maya Canfield, both of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

David M. Auslander
Masayoshi Tomizuka
M. J. Rabins