

Paul M. Higgs **FREE**

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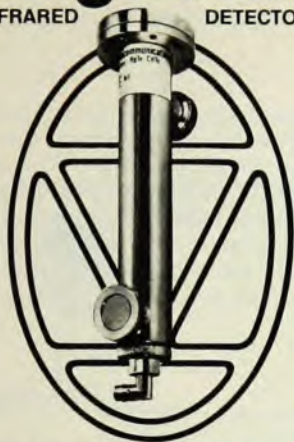


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take up new careers. Even though he took leaves to serve his country, he always returned to his position as head of the physics department he had built at the University of Illinois. He wished to be close to working physicists and to try to establish an active center of the best physics. He knew he could best achieve his goal as department head where he could judge what was happening first hand, take part as a colleague in research discussions and help to promote a spirit of excitement and importance of doing physics.

CHARLES P. SLICHTER

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Paul M. Higgs

Paul M. Higgs, Associate Professor Emeritus at the University of Washington, Seattle, died on 11 February at the age of 80. Upon graduation from the University in 1919, he was employed as a demonstrator; he then joined the teaching staff in 1926 and in 1959, was appointed associate professor.

Higgs's career was built on a love of physics. He was a master of experimental technique and had a remarkable intuitive grasp of the properties and uses of materials. One of the numerous examples of his ability was the time in 1946 when, relying for data mainly on some photographs of the ruins of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he successfully designed gauges to measure the underwater pressure-time characteristic of the Bikini atomic-bomb test. All attempts by others, above or under water, failed. It was also characteristic of this talented, enthusiastic physicist that within six years of his retirement (1966), he took up a vigorous part in a low-temperature research effort by contributing techniques for measurement and sample preparation.

Higgs brought physics alive to his students through the design and construction of laboratory and demonstration equipment, establishing a tradition that still remains strong in the department. Sometimes within months of their discovery, such phenomena as electron diffraction, the deuterium spectrum, optical pumping and the Mössbauer effect were available to his classes. During his final year of teaching, he was busy devising an apparatus for measuring the properties of "second sound" in liquid helium.

Asking only to serve, Higgs was uncomfortable with recognition given by the endowment of a prize in tribute to his sustained devotion to teaching, and in 1967, a citation from the American Association of Physics Teachers for distinguished service. His students and colleagues will remember him as a dedicated and effective teacher, but above all, a man of good will and good humor.

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