

## **In Memoriam**

### **Charles R. Wright, Life Senior Champion of History Center Activities**

By John Meredith

Director, IEEE Region 5 (Southwestern USA)

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Charles R. (Charlie) Wright, a great engineer, a dedicated IEEE leader, and a friend to many died on May 11. Charlie had a keen interest in engineering students and constantly encouraged them to become active in the IEEE. He also had a special interest in history and was a strong supporter of the IEEE History Center, especially its Milestones program, which honors significant achievements in the history of electrical and electronics engineering.

He served on the IEEE History Committee from 1984 to 1994. For much of that time, he was the Milestones coordinator responsible for helping IEEE sections compile their submissions for milestone designations and getting them approved by the IEEE Board of Directors. He was instrumental in bringing several milestones to Region 5 including the Ames Hydroelectric Generating Plant, a pioneering demonstration of AC power generation later utilized at larger plants at Niagara Falls; the transcontinental telegraph, which was the first high-speed link between the East and West coasts; and the Shoshone transmission line, a 150-mile power line. This was significant because of its length, the mountainous country where it was constructed, and because it operated under severe weather conditions.

Charlie was particularly proud of his work in creating a museum housed in a hydroelectric plant that was built in 1900 in Georgetown, Colorado. In 1992 he helped establish the Georgetown Energy Museum Foundation and served on its board. Today, the museum is a popular tourist site and features displays on

electric power production and utilization. Through Charlie's efforts, the Georgetown Hydroelectric Plant was designated an IEEE Milestone in 1992.

Charlie was involved in IEEE activities for 52 years, including 32 years as a member of the IEEE Power Engineering Society. He joined the Region 5 leadership team in 1983 as chair of the IEEE Denver Section and later served as IEEE Region 5 Director.

A native of Carthage, Missouri, Charlie attended Drury College in Springfield, Mo., transferring to Pittsburg State University in Kansas to complete a bachelor's degree in industrial arts. He taught at a high school after graduation, but soon entered military service as a pilot in the U.S. Army Air Corps. At the end of World War II Charlie was stationed at Lowry Air Base in Denver, where he later settled. Following his military service he joined Public Service Company of Colorado (PSC) in Golden as a draftsman. At his supervisors urging, Charlie took night courses in engineering at the University of Colorado (CU) in Boulder. His dedication, drive, and clever approach to solving real-world problems enabled him to advance rapidly. Although he never earned a degree in electrical engineering, Charlie was a registered professional engineer in Colorado under a clause that permitted self-made engineers to practice the profession. He retired in 1983 as supervisor of the electric standards section of PSC.

Charlie earned numerous awards during his career including the 1996 IEEE William W. Middleton Distinguished Service Award for preserving the history of electrical engineering and presenting it to the public, and the 1990 IEEE Larry K. Wilson Award for promoting student professional awareness conferences throughout the world. In 1989, he received the IEEE Denver Section John D. Peebles Award for contributions to the engineering profession.

Charlie's long service and dedication as an IEEE volunteer serves as an example to all who knew him.