



IN MEMORIAM

Lawrence B. Robinson
Professor of Biochemical Engineering
UC Los Angeles
1919 – 2005

Lawrence B. Robinson, a professor emeritus of chemical engineering at the UCLA Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science and an expert in thermodynamics and energy conversion devices, died March 21, 2005 at his home in Los Angeles of natural causes. He was 85.

“All of us who knew Larry personally can fully appreciate that the University has lost one of its finest gentlemen and scholars,” said Dean Vijay K. Dhir. “He will be missed tremendously.”

Robinson became a member of the UCLA engineering faculty in 1960, when he joined the College of Engineering as an associate professor. He was promoted to full professor two years later. He retired in 1990 after a distinguished career of research, teaching and university service, although he remained an active member of the faculty and continued to teach for many years. From 1984 to 1986, Robinson served as vice chair and acting chair of the Chemical Engineering Department, and also as assistant dean from 1969 to 1974 and as associate dean of the School from 1985 to 1990.

Robinson was born in Tappahannock, Virginia, and received his BS in mathematics from the Virginia Union University in 1939. He earned his MS in chemistry and PhD in chemical physics from Harvard University in 1941 and 1946, respectively. In 1943, he served his country in the Army Air Corps. Robinson was an assistant professor of physics at Howard University in Washington, D.C., from 1946 to 1947, returning in 1948 as an associate professor. He also was an assistant professor at Brooklyn College in New York, and a visiting professor at Rheinische Westthälische Technische Hochschule in Germany.

Robinson spent several years working in industry before coming to UCLA. He was a research engineer at North American Aviation and a research physicist at the Naval Research Lab in Washington, D.C. Robinson was a member of the technical staff at Ramo- Wooldridge Corporation and Space Technology Labs before joining the UCLA faculty.

During his career, Robinson’s research interests included the surface tension of electrolytes, neutron physics, reactor theory, the magnetic properties of solids and nonequilibrium thermodynamics. He brought a fundamental knowledge of physics and thermodynamics to UCLA, and both his students and colleagues benefited from his broad, interdisciplinary background. With other faculty in the department, he provided undergraduate students with more advanced training in theoretical thermodynamics than they could have received at another institution at the time.

He had a life long interest in the Old West, especially its art, and was a founding member of the Collegium of Western Art, as well as a member of The Westerners, an organization devoted to the history of the American West. Robinson also served on the board of The American Art Council for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Robinson is survived by his wife Laura, three children, Lyn Adrian, Gwendolyn Harvey, and Lawrence Baylor Jr., grandson Robinson Abraham Farber, sister Josephine Burton, brother- in- law Charles, two brothers, Luther and Julian Robinson, sisters- in- law Betty and Annie, and many nieces and nephews. He will be deeply missed by his family, friends and colleagues.

Harold G. Monbouquette