

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

EVERETT PARKER LESLEY (1874 – 1945)

Everett Parker Lesley, Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Emeritus died in Palo Alto, California, on January 17, 1945.

Born in Ohio in 1874 and raised in California, Professor Lesley was originally a member of Stanford's Pioneer Class. Upon receiving his A. B. in 1897, he embarked upon his engineering career at the old Union Iron Works of San Francisco. To gain practical experience in shipbuilding, he began as a ship fitter and rapidly rose thru the ranks to become foreman, then design draftsman and by 1903 was Assistant to the Naval Constructor. At this time, on the advice of Professor W. F. Durand, he left the shipyard to do graduate work in marine engineering and naval architecture at Cornell, where he was awarded the M. M. E... degree in 1905. For two years thereafter, he served as a member of the staff of the U. S. Naval Experimental Towing Tank in the Washington Navy Yard where he enjoyed the privilege of association with the late Admiral D. W. Taylor, the greatest naval architect of his time.

In 1907, Lesley returned to Stanford as a member of the faculty of the Department of Mechanical Engineering but for about two years performed no academic duties. During this period, as assistant to Dr. Durand, he devoted all of his time to the countless mechanical problems which arose in connection with reconstruction of the University after the earthquake. When this work was completed he assumed direction of the University's shops and for some time gave advanced work in that field. Having an unusual command of English and a flair for lucid and accurate expression, he also instituted and taught for many years a much-needed course in the preparation of engineering reports and specifications.

In 1916, Lesley and Durand designed and put into operation Stanford's first aerodynamic laboratory - the second in an American university. Building upon their experience in marine propulsion, their work on aircraft propellers during the next few years earned for them, and for Stanford, a position of world pre-eminence. Recognition was given to this pioneer work when, in 1926, the Daniel Guggenheim Fund for the Promotion of Aeronautics gave to Stanford the present aerodynamic laboratory along with the funds which enabled establishment of a program of graduate instruction in aeronautical engineering. Lesley directed these activities until the time of his academic retirement in 1939. The quality of his stewardship is best attested by the now distinguished group of young aeronautical engineers for whose training he was responsible.

Bill Lesley was a man of truly remarkable breadth and versatility. His interests, knowledge and ability extended far beyond the confines of the field of his technical specialization. He was as fond of art and the opera as he was of fishing and bridge; his hobbies ranged from the amateur theatre - in which he excelled - to his dahlias, which gave evidence of the true gardener's "green thumb". His ability to plan and execute with skill and wisdom found expression in his direction of the Student Affairs Committee during difficult post-war period of

1917-1919, in the modernization of the Stanford Bookstore during his presidency and in the revitalization of the Faculty Club in 1931, in acknowledgment of which he was made the second honorary member in the Club's history.

But with all these accomplishments, Bill was, at heart, a craftsman. His skill with the tools, machines and instruments of engineering held the respect of his colleagues and commanded the attention and admiration which students give only to those who can do as well as teach. He was, to them, an infallible source of wise counsel and by putting himself on their plane, achieved close, personal - and often highly confidential - relations which made of them his life long friends. He was entirely devoid of shallowness and sham and his example tended to diminish these in all about him. The stamp of his personality will long be clearly legible on this campus which he loved and his memory will be cherished by all the Stanford Family.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED by the Academic Council of Stanford University that this memorial to our departed colleague be recorded in the minutes of the Council and that a transcript thereof be sent to his wife, together with an expression of our deepest sympathy.

William Hawley Davis
Alfred S. Niles
Harry J. Rathbun
Elliott G. Reid, Chairman