

George A. Roberts: Exceptional ASM Leader

Nearing 100 Scholarship Mark

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This job is not a chore but a privilege, an honor, and an experience full of lasting memories.

George A. Roberts,
FASM

Excerpt from his Annual Address as the ASM President at the 37th ASM Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, October 19, 1955.

As ASM International prepares to celebrate its 100-year anniversary in Montréal, Québec, Canada, in October 2013, it is a fitting time to reflect on members who have played a major role in the society. Significant contributions of its many members and leaders have helped make ASM successful. One exceptional contributor to note is Dr. George A. Roberts, FASM. The society's longest living past president, Dr. Roberts has over 72 years of membership. Those years have made an enormous impact on the society.

Through his leadership and generosity, this year the ASM Materials Education Foundation is on the threshold of reaching a total of 100 scholarships funded by Dr. Roberts. The George A. Roberts scholarship program was initiated in 1995 to assist in providing more professionals in Materials Science and Engineering and help strengthen the U.S. in technical expertise and industrial developments. This is the ultimate example set by Dr. Roberts as a scientist/engineer, business executive, societal leader, and major supporter of science/engineering education.

Scientist/Engineer

Dr. George Roberts was born in Uniontown, Pa., and grew up in a small town near the West Virginia-Pennsylvania border. After a stint in the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md., George received a scholarship to study metallurgy at the Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University) in Pittsburgh under Dr. Robert F. Mehl. Originally planning on studying mathematics, the scholarship directly influenced Roberts' career choice. In 1942, he received a D.Sc. in metallurgical science from Carnegie.

Dr. Roberts was an active scientist and contributor in his field. ASM's *Tool Steels* reference book, published in 1944, was co-authored by George. He also contributed to numerous ASM publications, and holds several patents on alloy steels. Metallurgy and engineering continued to be the backbone of Dr. Roberts' career and, along with his keen mathematical skills, aided his business decisions.

Business Acumen

Vanadium Alloys Steel Co. (Vasco) in Latrobe, Pa., was where Dr. Roberts' metallurgical career dovetailed with his natural ability as an executive. Starting as a research metallurgist in 1941, after a series of promotions, he became president in 1961. While at the helm, he acquired many companies including Allvac Metals Corp. in Monroe, N.C. In 1966, he and long-time friend and colleague, Henry Singleton of Teledyne Corp., merged their two companies. The combined company addressed the need for high precision alloys and specialty metals that withstand



Dr. Roberts (first row, second from the right) with fellow ASM Past Presidents at MS&T 2012.



Ellen Wagner Roberts with husband, George and Anastasia Baker, 2009 scholarship winner. Baker is currently working in the materials field at FL Smidth in Salt Lake City, Utah.

ASM AWARDS BESTOWED ON ROBERTS YEAR

Bastien-Guillet Award (from the French Society SF2M)	2011
George A. Roberts Award	2003
Medal for the Advancement of Research	1992
50-year Member	1991
Life Member	1991
Fellow of ASM	1990
Gold Medal	1977
Honorary Membership	1973



Dr. Roberts (right) with Dr. Aziz I. Asphahani, FASM, the ASM /Roberts Challenge campaign chair and the 2005 Dr. George A. Roberts Award recipient.

the higher temperatures and stresses of aerospace applications. With Roberts as president and Singleton as CEO and chairman of the board, the two led Teledyne Inc. through a fantastic growth period that resulted in sales of \$3.5 billion in 1984. Dr. Roberts became chairman of this Fortune 500 company in 1991 and retired in 1993, devoting more effort to his ASM pursuits.

Societal Leader

It was Jim Gill, ASM president in 1940, who first introduced George Roberts to ASM and the value of its membership. Dr. Roberts went on to serve as ASM International's president in 1955 and has received numerous ASM awards for his service to the society. He was a founding member of the ASM Foundation in 1953, its president in 1956, served as a trustee for many years, and currently is emeritus trustee. Dr. Roberts has displayed an unprecedented level of exemplary leadership with his philanthropic activities.

Philanthropist

Dr. George Roberts is an extraordinary philanthropist for the ASM Materials Education Foundation in three key areas: funding, educational awards, and scholarships. With the ASM Foundation, he initiated the ASM / Roberts Challenge to spur societal giving in 2005. Donating \$1 million himself, his challenge led to nearly \$5 million in funds raised, giving new life to the Foundation and was a key factor in expanding its signature program: the ASM Materials Camp initiative (aimed at getting high school students interested in science and excited about engineering careers).

In 2003, the ASM Foundation established the George A. Roberts Award with George as the first recipient. The award is presented annually to an individual "who has made a significant impact to reach students and teachers, in efforts to increase awareness of materials and applied science careers." The award highlights the importance of educational outreach, and has been awarded thus far to ten deserving ASM members.

Undoubtedly, his namesake college scholarship program made a tremendous impact on its many student recipients. In 1995, as an expres-



Roberts with 2005 scholarship recipient, John Morris, currently a Materials and Process R&D Engineer at Boeing in Seattle, Wash.



Frauke Hogue receives the 2012 George A. Roberts Award from the award's namesake.



George Roberts (right background) observing Materials Campers at MS&T'11.

sion of Robert's commitment to education and the materials science and engineering community, the George A. Roberts Scholarship program was established. Each subsequent year, a handful of students benefit from his generosity (at an average of \$5000 per student). The cumulative result is that by ASM's 100th Anniversary celebration in October this year, the Roberts Scholarship program could reach the astounding mark of awarding scholarships to 100 college students.

Closure

As the U.S. is looking at gaining back its leadership in technology, it is reassuring to look at the example of George A. Roberts and try to cultivate more "ASMers" like him. ASM's next 100 years depend on it. During the inaugural year of his scholarship program, Dr. Roberts encouraged others to join him and his words serve as a reminder now: "My hope is that other members of ASM will follow the lead of the ASM Foundation and support the endowment of scholarships in whatever way they can. Perhaps we can get other members thinking they can do something too." In ASM's 100th anniversary year, Dr. Roberts serves as a prime example of how to make a difference, one student and one teacher at a time. □

For more information, contact ASM Foundation staff, Jeane Deatherage, program administrator at jeane.deatherage.asminternational.org or Ginny Shirk, administrative executive assistant at genny.shirk@asminternational.org.

Reference

Roberts, George A., *Distant Force: A Memoir of the Teledyne Corporation and the Man Who Created It*, 2007.

Tributes to George Roberts

I am deeply honored to be one of the recipients of the George A. Roberts Scholarship for the 2012-2013 academic school year. You are truly an inspiration for all that you have accomplished and continue to accomplish in your life.

*Kimberelle Thommasson
University of Washington*

Thank you so much for the privilege of accepting this exceptional award. Being able to attend and be part of such a wonderful materials science program like the one at Iowa State has helped shape who I am, not only professionally, but also in my personal life; making me more confident, outgoing, and a stronger leader.

*Kate Lindley
Iowa State University*

Working with the ASM Foundation has given me great pleasure, tremendous professional growth and immense personal satisfaction. Thank you for helping me nurture a passion and the invaluable work you do to improve education for both teachers and students.

*Debbie Goodwin,
Materials Camp Master Teacher
2008 George A. Roberts Award recipient*