



William (Bill) Hewlett in 1939, the year he received his degree of Engineer from Stanford University. Photograph with permission of Hewlett-Packard, 2001.

**William Hewlett** Born 20 May 1913, Ann Arbor MI; Died 12 January 2001, Palo Alto CA; With David Packard, founder of the computer company which bears their names; patent holder on resistor-capacitance oscillators and other electronic devices<sup>1</sup>.

Educ: BA, Stanford University, 1934; MS, Electrical Engineering, MIT, 1936; BS, Electrical Engineering, Stanford University, 1939; Prof. Exp: Hewlett-Packard Corporation: CCo-founder and Partner, 1939-47, Vice President and Director, 1947-57, Executive Vice-President and Director, 1957-64, President and Director, 1964-68, President, Chief Executive Officer and Director, 1969-77, Chairman of Executive Committee, Chief Executive Officer and Director, 1977-78, Chairman of Executive Committee and Director, 1978-83, Vice Chairman, Board of Directors, 1983-87, Director Emeritus, Board of Directors, 1987-2001; Honors and Awards: Life Fellow, Institute of Radio Engineers (now IEEE), 1948; Fellow, AIEE, "For technical and administrative achievements in the development and

manufacture of precision electrical measuring equipment", 1959; Honorary Lifetime Membership, Instrument Society of America, 1963; Member, National Academy of Engineering, 1965; California Manufacturer of the Year, California Manufacturer's Assn., 1969; Fellow, American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 1970; Medal of Achievement, WEMA (Western Electronic Manufacturers Assn.), 1971; Industrialist of the Year (with David Packard), California Museum of Science and Industry and California Museum Foundation, 1973; US National Medal of Science, 1985; Award (with David Packard), Scientific Apparatus Makers Association, 1975; Life Fellow Membership, the Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, 1976; Member, National Academy of Sciences, 1977; Medal of Honor, City of Boeblingen, Germany, 1977; Herbert Hoover Medal for Distinguished Service, Stanford University Alumni Association, 1977; Member, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1981; Henry Heald Award, Illinois Institute of Technology, 1984; Member, National Academy of Sciences, the President's Circle, 1989; Director, Institute of Radio Engineers, (now the IEEE), 1950-57; President, 1954; LL.D., University of California (Berkeley), 1966; California Manufacturer of the Year, California Manufacturers' Association, 1969; Business Statesman of the Year, Harvard Business School of Northern California, 1970; Medal of Achievement, WEMA (Western Electronic Manufacturers Assn.), 1971; Founders Medal, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), to Hewlett and Packard, 1973; Industrialist of the Year, to Hewlett and Packard, California Museum of Science and Industry and California Museum Foundation, 1973; SAMA (Scientific Apparatus Makers Association) Award, to Hewlett and Packard, 1975; Vermilye Medal, to Hewlett and Packard, the Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, 1976; Corporate Leadership Award, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1976; LL.D., Yale University, 1976; Medal of Honor, City of Böblingen, West Germany, 1977; Herbert Hoover Medal for Distinguished Service, Stanford University Alumni Association, 1977; D.Sc., Kenyon College, 1978; D.Sc.,

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<sup>1</sup> Variable Frequency Oscillation Generator, US Patent No. 2,268,872

Polytechnic Institute of New York, 1978; Eng.D., University of Notre Dame, 1980; Eng.D., Utah State University, Logan, Utah, 1980; Eng.D., Dartmouth College, 1983; LL.D., Mills College, 1983; Henry Heald Award, Illinois Institute of Technology, 1984; L.H.D., Johns Hopkins University, 1985; Doctor of Public Policy, Rand Graduate Institute, 1985; National Medal of Science, 1985; Santa Clara County Business Hall of Fame Laureate Award, Junior Achievement, 1987; World Affairs Council Award, World Affairs Council of Northern California, 1987; Degree of Uncommon Man, Stanford University, 1987; Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, 1987; National Business Hall of Fame Laureate Award, Junior Achievement, 1988; Doctor of Electronic Science, University of Bologna, Italy, 1989; John M. Fluke, Sr. Memorial Pioneer Award, Electronics Test magazine, 1990; Doctor of Humanities, Santa Clara University, 1991; Silicon Valley Engineering Hall of Fame Award, Silicon Valley Engineering Council, 1991; Exemplary Leader Award, American Leadership Forum, Silicon Valley Chapter, 1992; Alexis de Tocqueville Society Award, United Way of Santa Clara County, 1991; National Inventors Hall of Fame Award, National Inventors Hall of Fame Foundation, Akron, 1992; Computer Entrepreneur Award, IEEE Computer Society, 1995.

Hewlett was born in the university town of Ann Arbor, MI on 20 May 1913. His father was a professor of medicine at the University of Michigan and, later, at Stanford University. Packard attended Stanford University in Stanford, CA, and received a bachelor of arts degree in 1934 and a bachelor of science degree in electrical engineering in 1939. He also received a master's degree in electrical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1936.

Hewlett met David Packard during their undergraduate days at Stanford. While in graduate school he developed the design for the product that later launched the

Hewlett-Packard company — the model HP200A audio oscillator. Until Hewlett's invention, scientists and researchers had no simple and accurate source for low-frequency signals essential to their work. The two engineering classmates became friends and formed a partnership known as Hewlett-Packard Company (HP) in 1939. The company's first "plant" was a small garage in Palo Alto, and the initial capital amounted to \$538. One of Hewlett-Packard's first customers was Walt Disney Studios, which ordered eight of the Model 200B oscillators to use in producing the soundtrack for the film 'Fantasia.' This order put the small company in business [Caddes 1986].

Hewlett was involved actively in management of the company until 1987, with the exception of the years he served as an Army officer during World War II. He was on the staff of the Army's Chief Signal Officer and then headed the electronics section of the New Development Division of the War Department Special Staff. During this latter tour of duty, he was on a special U.S. team that inspected Japanese industry immediately after the war.

In 1947, shortly after he returned to Palo Alto, Hewlett was named vice president. He was elected executive vice president in 1957, president in 1964, and also was named chief executive officer in 1969.

Hewlett resigned as president in 1977 and retired as chief executive officer in 1978 in accordance with his previously announced plans for management succession within HP. He then served as chairman of HP's executive committee until 1983, when he became vice chairman of the HP board of directors. In 1987, he was named director emeritus.

Over the years, Hewlett has contributed to the advancement of various organizations within the electronics industry. From 1950 to 1957 he was on the

board of directors of the Institute of Radio Engineers – now the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) – and served as president of the institute in 1954. He also has played an important role in the development of the former Western Electronic Manufacturers Association, now called the American Electronics Association. In 1985, former President Reagan awarded him the National Medal of Science, the nation's highest scientific honor.

Hewlett had a keen interest in education and medicine. He was a trustee of Mills College in Oakland, Calif., from 1958 to 1968 and Stanford University from 1963 to 1974, and was a member of the San Francisco regional panel of the Commission on White House Fellows from 1969 to 1970.

He served as board president and later director of the Palo Alto-Stanford Hospital Center from 1958 to 1962 (now Stanford Medical Center). He was director of the Kaiser Foundation Hospital and Health Plan Board from 1972 to 1978, and the Drug Abuse Council in Washington, D.C., from 1972 to 1974.

Hewlett was an honorary trustee of the California Academy of Sciences, a member of the National Academy of Engineering and the National Academy of Sciences, and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Hewlett was director of the National Academies' Corporation and the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute. Starting in 1966, he served as chairman of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, which he established with his late wife Flora. He was trustee emeritus of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

Hewlett held 11 honorary degrees from American colleges and universities: honorary doctor of law

degrees from the University of California in Berkeley, Yale University and Mills College in Oakland, Calif.; honorary doctor of science degrees from Polytechnic Institute of New York and Kenyon College in Ohio; honorary doctor of engineering degrees from the University of Notre Dame, Dartmouth College and Utah State University; an honorary doctor of humane letters from Johns Hopkins University; and an honorary doctor of public policy degree from the Rand Graduate Institute and an honorary doctor of humanities degree from Santa Clara University in California. He also held an honorary doctor of electronic science degree from University of Bologna in Italy.



William (Bill) R. Hewlett, director emeritus and co-founder of Hewlett-Packard Company, 1984. Used with permission

Hewlett had a wide range of outside interests and hobbies, most of them based on his love for the outdoors. He was a part-time botanist and an accomplished mountain climber, skier and fisherman. He also maintained various ranching and cattle-raising operations with David Packard in California and Idaho.

## Bibliography

### Biographical

Caddes, Carolyn. 1986. Portraits of Success: Impressions of Silicon Valley Pioneers, Tioga Publishing Co., Palo Alto CA.