

William Schriever (1894-1958)

On the 20th of November 1958, the Oklahoma Academy of Science lost one of the staunchest of its members when Dr. William Schriever, Professor of Physics at the University of Oklahoma, well-known geophysicist, and long-time member of the Academy, succumbed to a lingering illness at the age of 64.

Dr. Schriever was born in Dakota City, Nebraska in 1894. He received his BA degree from Morningside College in 1916; his MS from the University of Iowa in 1917; and PhD from that same institution in 1921, while on leave from the University of Oklahoma, whose faculty he had joined in 1919 at the close of the Great War.

His association with the Academy spanned the better portion of its existence. His first paper was read to it at its 8th annual meeting in 1920; his last, posthumously at the 1958 meeting. Recognizing early the utility of physical methods in geological discovery, he assisted in basic research and at the same time developed the first educational program in geophysics in the State of Oklahoma.

He was a fellow of the American Petroleum Institute, of the American Physical Society, of the Oklahoma Academy; first president of Sigma XI at the University of Oklahoma; and a member of numerous other societies. Major recognition of his contributions to geophysical exploration came shortly before his death when he was elected almost simultaneously the first honorary member of the Geophysical Society of Tulsa, and fourteenth honorary member of the Society of Exploration Geophysicists.

Dr. Schriever's research interests ranged over many fields, embracing a meteor hypothesis of the origin of those unusual elliptical lake-swamp formations in the Carolinas known as the Carolina Bays; studies of the magnetic properties of matter; pioneer developments in the application of electron tubes; the invention of a simple device for measuring mass without resort to gravitational forces (the Schriever Mass Balance); the investigation of cathode processes in electrolysis; the measurement of absolute contact potentials between solutions; a study of streaming potentials in sands of known porosity; as well as research on the effect of primary-cell currents between unlike dental fillings upon the well-being of the people.

Active as he was in research, Dr. Schriever will be best remembered by his students and colleagues as a man of infinite kindness and gentleness. Shy, yet friendly, he loved his fellows and gave freely of his knowledge and spirit and effort in their behalf. His absence will be keenly felt by all who have known him.

Richard G. Fowler