

Donald Alan Dunn  
1925-2011

Prof. Donald A. Dunn, a resident of Atherton, California for 50 years, died peacefully at Stanford hospital on September 27, 2011 after a long illness. He was 85 years old.

Don was a passionate teacher and innovator, frequently engaged in multiple fields of study and work contemporaneously. In the 1960s, Don was involved in the formation of an innovative new department at Stanford, the Department of Engineering – Economic Systems. EES was created to apply methods of systems and economic analysis to engineering problems involving policy and decision-making, both in government and industry. The area of policy analysis in EES was a primary interest for Don; he developed a course on that subject for the department. He served as a professor and associate chair of EES for many years, retiring in 1995.

Don's early publishing was in various fields of physics and electronics, including microwave electron tubes, microwave power systems, and computer simulations of plasmas. More recently he published in areas of systems engineering, satellite and computer communication, and telecommunications public policy.

Born and raised in southern California, Dunn attended South Pasadena-San Marino High, taking chemistry courses at Pasadena Junior College. In 1943, the Navy began enrolling officer candidates in its V-12 college training program, and Don was admitted to Cal Tech, where he studied chemistry with Linus Pauling and history with J.E. Wallace Sterling, graduating in three years. He completed his naval service aboard a light cruiser and then came to northern California to work for Eitel McCullough, where he eventually served as Director of Research.

Not only did Don attend graduate school at Stanford University, studying electrical engineering under Fred Terman and receiving his PhD in electrical engineering in 1956, he also attended Stanford Law School, winning the first Hellman Legal Writing Prize. Just before starting law school, Don met Jane Goodspeed, a graduate of the Stanford School of Education and a teacher at Palo Alto High School, and they were married in 1948. He received the LL.B. degree from Stanford Law school in 1951, and was a member of the bar of the state of California; he was admitted to practice before the US patent office, and to practice patent law as an attorney with the firm of Flehr and Swain in San Francisco and also for Hughes Aircraft in Los Angeles.

While in law school, Don also worked in tube lab at the Stanford Electronics Research Lab (ERL); he later became director of the Electron Devices Laboratory at Stanford and director

of the Stanford Plasma Physics Laboratory. He was a pioneer in the field of microwave to research, working with Dean Watkins, Hubert Heffner, Lester Field, Ed Ginzton, Carl Spangenberg, and Marvin Chodorow. As a microwave engineer, Don was a consultant on the ECM pods of the XB70 supersonic bomber. He was chair of the International Symposium on Microwave Power held at Stanford in 1967, and a member of the board of governors of the International Microwave Power Institute from 1966 to 1968. In 1970 he co-authored a book on the future of satellite communications, and in 1972, he wrote Models of Particles and Moving Media. He was a senior member and former chair of the San Francisco section of the IEEE.

Don was also affiliated with the Stanford Research Institute, where he directed a study on the interdependence of computers and communications for the FCC. He was consultant to the National Academy of Engineering's Committee on Telecommunications and addressed the 91st Congress in 1969, about telecommunications policy.

In 1976, in an interview in Computerworld Magazine, Don predicted growth from 500,000 online terminal users to 50 million. In the late 70s, as a telecommunications policy specialist, he was an expert witness for the AT&T breakup case. In 1979, he co-authored a book on the importance of consumer information for the National Science Foundation.

At Stanford EES department, Don was an enthusiastic and inspirational teacher, and he could regularly be seen riding his bicycle through the Quad to and from classes. Teaching was a crucial aspect of his life from the 1960s until his work as an emeritus professor in the 1990s. He traveled widely, both as a professor and consultant in the field of telecommunications, often with his family, and he gradually particularly enjoyed visiting his graduate students in their home countries, including China, Greece, Brazil, Italy, Korea, Norway, England, and Israel. He had a lifelong love of the opera, which he attended in San Francisco and around the world. Upon his retirement, he enjoyed spending time at the beach in Aptos, continued to write and to advise students, and continued his 40 years of neighborhood runs and daily swims at the DeGuerre Pool.

We will remember Don as a nice guy with a warm smile who was always helpful to his colleagues and his students. He radiated a great sense of humor that uplifted every encounter.

Don is survived by his wife of 63 years, Elizabeth Jane Dunn, his children, William Goodspeed Dunn and Dr. Elizabeth Ross Dunn, his son-in-law, Dr. Richard Johannson, and two grandchildren, Liam and Willem Johannson.

Mr. Chairman, I have the honor, on behalf of a committee consisting of David Luenberger,

James Sweeney, and myself, Ronald Howard, to lay before the Senate of the Academic Council a Resolution in the memory of the late Donald A. Dunn, Professor Emeritus of Management Science and Engineering, in the School of Engineering.