

Alumni News

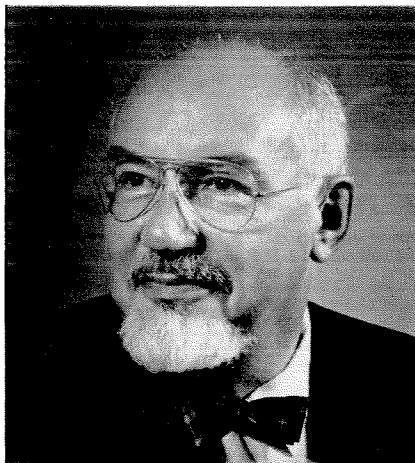
George W. Downs (1911-1964)

George W. Downs, Ex '34, widely known electronics engineer and instrument manufacturer, died suddenly in Pasadena of a heart attack on November 8, 1964.

Born in South Dakota on January 29, 1911, George lived most of his life in southern California, primarily in Pasadena. He entered Caltech as a freshman in 1930, but the pinch of the Depression forced him to seek employment in 1932. He never completed his Caltech education, yet through diligent self-study to satisfy the continuing demands of an active, perceptive mind, George became an outstanding alumnus. His loyalty to Caltech was truly exceptional and his gratitude for his early education and continuing association with the Institute was boundless.

The professional record of George Downs began with James Lansing in the Lansing Manufacturing Company where, in the development of the original Lansing sound systems, George made original contributions to the design of speakers and amplifiers and had an opportunity to satisfy his instincts for high quality of design and performance of equipment. Then, and throughout his life, the things which George did bore the mark of quality.

After four years with James Lansing, George joined the William Miller Corporation, Pasadena, builders of oscillographic recording equipment and related transducers. There he served as Development Engineer until August 1941, when he joined the Division of War Research of the University of California at San Diego. His work there was concerned primarily with problems



George W. Downs

of underwater acoustics and sonar.

The San Diego experience caused George to become interested in Caltech's wartime activity in the improvement of aircraft torpedoes and the problems of their water entry after launch. He joined the Caltech Torpedo Project in 1943, in charge of electronics and instrumentation, and his ingenuity and experience in instrument development were highly effective here. Similarly, in 1944, when Caltech was asked to assist in certain engineering features of the Manhattan Project, George made further contributions by dividing his time and creating a new electronics group to support critical developments in progress at Los Alamos.

In September 1945 George returned to the Miller Corporation as Executive Vice-President and Chief Engineer. He continued in this activity until 1954, when the corporation was merged into Consolidated Electrodynamics Corporation. Concurrently, he participated with Howard Cary, BS '30, and William Miller in the formation of the Applied Physics Corporation, in which George served as Vice-President. This company, started in Pasadena, soon outgrew its facilities and moved to Monrovia.

In addition, George was president of the Research Instrument Corporation of Pasadena, and a director of the following corporations: Research Instrument Corporation, Applied Physics, Preco, ADCOM, Electra Motors, Dynamic Instrumentation, and Superweld.

Professionally, George was a Fellow of the Acoustical Society of America and the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, a member of the American Physical Society and the Optical Society of America. He was also a member of the Jonathan Club of Los Angeles.

At Caltech, George Downs held a faculty appointment as Associate in Engineering and, on a part-time basis, participated in the courses in engineering design. In addition, many segments of the campus benefited from his helpful suggestions, technical assistance, and generous contributions of specialized equipment and instruments. On the cultural side, George found much satisfaction in serving as a director of the Coleman Chamber Concerts Association. He was also a member and director of the California Institute Associates.

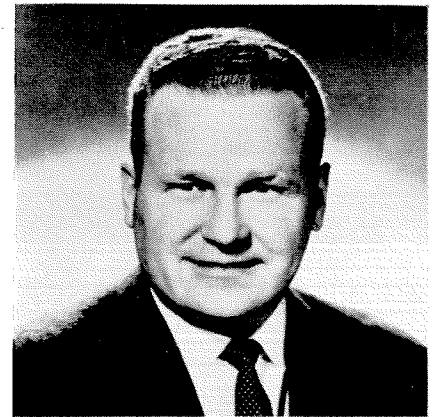
George had, during this past year, following the death of his wife Bea-

trice, been in process of rearranging his business affairs to give him more time for his hobbies, travel, and his Caltech interests. On September 1, 1964, George and Rosalyn Tureck were married in London. Miss Tureck, famed concert pianist and interpreter of Bach, had been a friend of George's for many years, and Mr. and Mrs. Downs planned to have a home in Pasadena.

In addition to Mrs. Downs, George is survived by a brother, Lemuel Downs, of Costa Mesa, California; and a sister, Mrs. H. M. Piper, of South Dakota.

—F. C. Lindvall

All-America Award



Don L. Walter, '40, MS '41, vice-president and general manager of the power systems division of the Marquardt Corporation, has been elected to *Sports Illustrated's* Silver Anniversary All-America. This is an annual award by the sports magazine to 25 men on the basis of their career success and community service in the intervening 25 years since their senior football season at college. Nomination for the honor is made by each candidate's alma mater, and election is by a panel of eminent judges.

As a Caltech undergraduate, Don Walter was a three-sport letterman, captain of the 1939 football team, and an honorable mention all-conference player.

After receiving his MS from Caltech in 1941, Don worked at Douglas Aircraft in power plant engineering until 1945, when he joined Roy Marquardt '40, MS '42, at the newly formed Marquardt Aircraft in Van Nuys. In June 1947 he returned to Douglas as chief engineer of the testing division, then rejoined Marquardt as chief engineer in 1948. He is now considered one of the country's leading experts in rocket and advanced propulsion systems.