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To start a conversation, contact us at (626) 395-2927 or [giftplanning@caltech.edu](mailto:giftplanning@caltech.edu).

Learn more at [giftplanning.caltech.edu/stocks](http://giftplanning.caltech.edu/stocks).

**Caltech**

# In Memoriam

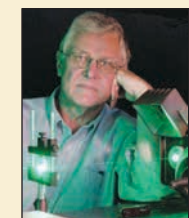
To learn more about their lives and work, visit [magazine.caltech.edu/post/in-memoriam](http://magazine.caltech.edu/post/in-memoriam).

## Stephen R. Onderdonk (1944–2024)



Onderdonk, retired CEO of Econolite Control Products Inc. and a member of the Caltech Board of Trustees, passed away on October 29, 2024, at age 80. He was first named to the Board in 1986. One of the longest-serving trustees, he was a member of the Finance, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee at the time of his death. Onderdonk began his career working for a year as a corporate banking officer with United California Bank, then joined the Colwell Mortgage Trust as vice president in 1972. He became manager of the Investment Real Estate Division of the Seeley Company, Los Angeles, in 1975. Onderdonk and business partner Mike Doyle purchased the struggling Econolite Control Products in 1978, which eventually became the nation's largest manufacturer of traffic control equipment.

## William B. Bridges (1934–2024)



Bridges, the Carl F Braun Professor of Engineering, Emeritus, passed away on November 1, 2024, at age 89. Bridges invented the argon ion laser, which is still used to treat diabetic retinopathy, in DNA sequencing, and to help increase the power of other lasers. Bridges joined the Caltech faculty in 1977 as a professor of electrical engineering and applied physics. He was a Sherman Fairchild Distinguished Scholar at Caltech during the 1974–75 academic year and was named Braun Professor in 1983. He served as executive officer for electrical engineering from 1978 to 1981. Bridges is credited with establishing electrical engineering as a major for undergraduates at Caltech, and he served as faculty director of the Program in Advanced Technologies, a Caltech program designed to use corporate funding to enable the work of young faculty members or innovative new avenues of research.

## Fred Shair (1936–2025)



Shair, who founded Caltech's Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program in 1979, passed away on January 16, 2025, at age 88. Shair was professor of chemical engineering at Caltech when he founded the SURF program. In the mid-1990s, Shair served as the manager of the educational affairs office at NASA's JPL, which is managed by Caltech. He continued to consult for the SURF program through the 2000s.

## Jenijoy La Belle (1943–2024)



La Belle, professor of English, emeritus, passed away on January 28, 2025, at age 81. A scholar of William Blake, William Shakespeare, and Theodore Roethke, she wrote about issues of women's identity and physical appearance in 19th- and 20th-century literature. In 1969, La Belle became the first woman hired into a tenure-track teaching position at Caltech, a milestone she was unaware of when she was hired. She received tenure in 1977, also the first woman to do so. La Belle pioneered a series of Shakespeare courses in collaboration with Shirley Marneus, Caltech's then theater arts director.

## Arden L. Albee (1928–2025)



Albee, professor of geology and planetary science, emeritus, and former chief scientist at NASA's JPL, which is managed by Caltech, passed away on March 19, 2025, at age 96. Albee came to Caltech in 1959 as a visiting assistant professor. He stayed on as an associate professor of geology, becoming a full professor in 1966 and professor of geology and planetary science in 1999. NASA recruited Albee, a petrologist, to analyze lunar samples retrieved by the Apollo 11 mission in 1969. He found that the Moon rocks were older than any that had yet been identified on Earth. Albee later worked on remote-sensing instrumentation that could analyze Martian rocks from the vantage point of an orbiting spacecraft. He served as JPL's chief scientist from 1979–84, and as Caltech's dean of graduate studies from 1984–2000.

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