

LETTERS

Colleague honors Brown and Ritchie

Although I knew beforehand through the physics grapevine that both Walter Brown and Rufus Ritchie had died, their obituaries published together in the April 2018 issue of PHYSICS TODAY (pages 64 and 65) caused me to recognize how our colleagues' interactions and accomplishments affect our careers. I had the great good fortune to work with both Brown and Ritchie. I did my graduate

work at Rutgers University at a time when Bell Labs shared development and operation of a new tandem accelerator facility. Many Bell employees, including Brown and Walter Gibson, had joint appointments and did research on the Rutgers-Bell tandem.

When Gibson, my thesis adviser, went on sabbatical, Brown mentored me throughout my thesis work. After I graduated, my first job in the real world was in Brown's group at Bell Labs. In addition to continuing my research on the Rutgers-Bell tandem, I assisted Brown in converting a small neutron generator for use in semiconductor research; that led us to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, in search of a multi-ion source that could modify the accelerator for ion implantation of various ion species.

Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) had a long history in the development of multi-ion sources because they were used in calutron facilities that separated uranium isotopes for the first atomic bomb. But ORNL also had lots of accelerators, including a tandem one used for research similar to that pursued at the Rutgers-Bell tandem. Through interactions with scientists there and continued contacts at conferences, I got to know the ORNL group well, and my next

career move was to go work with them. Several of our varied experimental research interests led us to Ritchie, who became a significant source of theoretical support and collaboration.

The obituaries in PHYSICS TODAY were skillfully written by colleagues whose careers were also touched by Brown and Ritchie. Hundreds of others were influenced by them directly and thousands more by their research accomplishments. As noted, Brown was an excellent and prolific experimentalist, and working in his group set high standards for planning and performing experiments. Ritchie was an experimentalist's theorist who could listen to the puzzling trends of your measurements and come back with supporting explanations of the observations and projections of the possibilities.

As co-editor-in-chief of a review journal, I am always impressed to see how knowledge in all fields builds on the accomplishments of others. These two scientists were exemplary for the numerous areas of physics their careers touched, as their obituaries show.

Bill R. Appleton
(applet@eng.ufl.edu)
University of Florida
Gainesville **FL**

CONTACT PHYSICS TODAY

Letters and commentary are encouraged and should be sent by email to ptletters@aip.org (using your surname as the Subject line), or by standard mail to Letters, PHYSICS TODAY, American Center for Physics, One Physics Ellipse, College Park, MD 20740-3842. Please

include your name, work affiliation, mailing address, email address, and daytime phone number on your letter and attachments. You can also contact us online at <http://contact.physicstoday.org>. We reserve the right to edit submissions.

Enabling Components for Emerging Technologies

"Nor-Cal Products chambers and components are simply superior, matched only by the quality of service they provide."

Marco Marchetto PhD
ISAC high energy facility coordinator
Project Leader - ARIEL-II RIB Transport System



L to R: Marco Marchetto and Norman Muller



**Innovative Engineering
Precision Manufacturing
Exceptional Service**

Nor-Cal Products



by PFEIFFER VACUUM

800.824.4166
www.n-c.com
ncsales@n-c.com

Custom & Standard Vacuum Components for Industry & Research