

Gerald Leroy Liedl
(1933 - 2023)



Gerald L. Liedl was born on March 2, 1933 in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. As a young man, he was quite athletic and involved in sports, particularly in football. He played for his Fergus Falls high school football team as a fullback. In 1950, the Fergus Falls Otters was one of the unbeaten high school football teams, thanks to the efforts of Jerry Liedl, who set a new record of 76 scored points that included 12 touchdowns in the Minn-Kota conference. Naturally, the excellent reputation of Purdue both in football and engineering programs attracted Jerry to come to

West Lafayette for his college education and he was offered a football scholarship.

Liedl's college football career was cut short by a shoulder injury. He joined the Metallurgical Engineering program at Purdue University and obtained a B.S.Met.E. degree in 1955 and a Ph.D. in 1960. His graduate research was in the area of design and analysis of an x-ray diffractometer under the direction of Professor Pekka Rautala. As an instructor, he taught courses dealing with x-ray diffraction of materials. In 1957, he married Carol Lee of Chicago, who pursued many interests, including world history and history of arts, genealogy, basket making, quilting, painting and the needle arts.

Jerry Liedl formally joined the faculty of the School of Metallurgical Engineering as Assistant Professor in 1959. He rose through the ranks to Associate Professor in 1965, Assistant Head in 1969 and Professor in 1973. In 1978, he was appointed as the fourth Head of the School of Materials Engineering. In that capacity, he directed the affairs of the school for 21 years and has been the longest serving head in the history of the School.

Jerry Liedl was known for his ever-present smile and his friendly personality. He had a great sense of humor and the uncanny ability to interact with faculty, staff and students with equal ease and comfort. These traits were behind his success in seeing the MSE School through its ups and downs during his long tenure as the head. He displayed his innate leadership ability in getting new programs initiated both in academic and research endeavors, such as innovative undergraduate programs, collaborative interdisciplinary research, and expansion of microstructural analysis facilities.

Jerry Liedl advised or co-advised 12 M.S. and 11 Ph.D. students and helped them to excel in their careers. He authored or co-authored more than 70 technical papers with his students and colleagues in the areas of x-rays, crystal structure, thin films, and superconductivity, and presented several invited talks on technical topics as well as on materials education.

Liedl had many leadership contributions to the School of Materials Engineering and the materials community at Purdue and the Midwest including:

1. He played a key role in identifying the evolutionary trends and opportunities in the broad field of Materials Science and Engineering, as a member of the National Research Council (NRC) MSE education panel (1985-88) and the National Science Foundation (NSF-DMR) Education panel (1987-88). He helped define the scientific basis and engineering principles for an innovative, undergraduate program that was later designed and adopted by the MSE faculty in the early 1990s, transitioning degrees offered from Metallurgical Engineering to Materials Science and Engineering at all degree levels.
2. During 1985-87, he was the founding chairman of the University Materials Council (formerly called DEPTH committee), the organization of all MSE department heads in North America.
3. He founded and directed the six-institution Midwest Superconductivity Consortium (MISCON) in the early 1990's with Purdue University faculty playing a key role in the investigation of high T_c superconductors.
4. He was the Director of MATRIX - the Midwest Analytical Team for Research Instrumentation of X-rays (1980-99) that designed and operated a high flux synchrotron x-ray beam line for materials research.
5. He was the Director of the X-ray Facility (1971-99) and the Microstructural Analysis Facility operated by the School of Materials Engineering (1968-90).
6. He supervised the move of the MSE school from the old CMET building to the MSEE building (1988).

Jerry Liedl built a strong record of service to professional societies and organizations, such as The Metallurgical Society (TMS), American Society for Metals (ASM), and American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE), and the Materials Research Society (MRS). He served TMS in many capacities, as Director of Education (1995-98) on the Board of Directors; Chairman of the Education Subcommittee (1984-89); Chairman of the Accreditation Committee (1993-96); and Creator of Career Resource Center (1995-99). For MRS he served on the MRS Bulletin Technical Editorial Board (1991-95) and as Chair, Frontiers in Materials Education Symposium, and a Guest Editor MRS Bulletin, May/June 1987. For the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), he served as: Accreditation Evaluator for Metallurgical/Materials Programs (1980-1999); Chair, Evaluator Training Committee (1993-99); TMS Liaison to Board of Directors, (1995-98). He also served as the Chair of the Department Heads of Materials/Metallurgical Engineering Programs, DEPTH Committee (1984-85).

Due to his technical expertise in the area of x-ray diffraction and instrumentation and in the broad field of materials, he served as a Member of the Materials Science Committee (1982-85) and Advanced Photon Source Committee (1985-88) for Argonne National Laboratory; and was Chairman of Scattering Subgroup for Brookhaven National Laboratory (1983-91). He was on the Department of Energy Ad Hoc Committee to review National Synchrotron facilities (1986-89) and on the Indiana Steel Industry Advisory Commission appointed by Governor of Indiana (1987-91).

Jerry Liedl was a recipient of several honors from alumni, professional societies, and the government. These include the 1976 Alumni Foundation Teaching Incentive Award, he was named a Fellow of the American Society for Metals, and received the TMS Distinguished Service Award. Indiana Governor O'Bannon recognized Jerry with the Sagamore of the Wabash Award in 1999; the award is highest honor which the Governor of Indiana bestows as a personal tribute usually given to those who have rendered distinguished service to the state or to the governor. He held a US patent # 854708 entitled "Monochromator for Continuous Spectrum X-ray Radiation."

Liedl retired in June 1999 after 41 years on the Purdue faculty. After retirement, he and Carol moved to Carriage Park, Hendersonville, North Carolina, where they built a new home. Their two daughters, Barbara Liedl and Janice Myatt, live in Dunbar, West Virginia and Sudbury, ONT, Canada, respectively. Carol was a master quilter and Jerry picked up quilting as a hobby among others during his retirement. Carol died on April 2, 2003. In 2016, Jerry married his longtime partner, Emilee Cantieri. The two of them explored the world by plane, ship, car, and foot.

Jerry Liedl has been very much involved in service activities in the Carriage Park community. In due recognition of his many contributions to the folks in his neighborhood, a small dam across a local river was named *The Gerald L. Liedl Dam* in April 2006.

Jerry Liedl passed away on November 12th in Hendersonville, North Carolina. He is survived by his wife, Emilee Cantieri, two daughters, Barbara Liedl and Janice Liedl-Myatt, granddaughters Eleanor and Constance Myatt; and his brother Robert (Melissa) Liedl, as well as a large and loving extended family.