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CHARLES LEE REESE

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Dr. Charles Lee Reese, a former president of the American Chemical Society and a member of the board of directors of E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company, died on April 12 at Jacksonville, Fla., following a heart attack. Dr. Reese would have been seventy-eight years old November 4. He and Mrs. Reese had left their home in Wilmington, Del., to spend the winter in Florida.

At his retirement January 1, 1931, Dr. Reese completed a distinguished career as an educator and industrial leader. Between 1911 and 1924 he was Chemical Director of the du Pont Company, thereafter serving as a consultant until his retirement.

Dr. Reese was a native of Baltimore, where he was born in 1862, a son of the late John S. and Arnoldina O. (Focke) Reese. After attending Johns Hopkins University for one year, he transferred to the University of Virginia. Upon completing his studies there in 1884, he went to Germany to study chemistry at the Universities of Heidelberg and Göttingen, receiving the degree of doctor of philosophy from Heidelberg in 1886. Studying under Bunsen, then in his prime, he completed the work for the degree in the remarkably short time of eighteen months.

Upon his return to the United States, he became an assistant in chemistry at Johns Hopkins University and remained a member of that faculty until 1888, when he joined the faculty of Wake Forest College for one year before going to South Carolina Military College at Charleston as Instructor in chemistry and physics.

In 1896 he returned to Johns Hopkins as an instructor and served in that capacity until 1900, the year in which he decided to leave teaching and enter the industrial field. His first industrial post was as chief chemist for the New Jersey Zinc Company, where he was largely concerned with problems incident to the manufacture of sulfuric acid. He joined the du Pont Company in 1902.

Dr. Reese's professional achievements centered in his role as one of the pioneers in the development of modern commercial blasting explosives, especially the so-called permissibles for use in gaseous and dusty coal mines, gelatin dynamite, and non-freezing dynamite. He carried out some research work before entering the industrial field on the origin of the Carolina phosphates and as a result of his investigations contention among geologists over the origin of these phosphates was ended. Later, in conjunction with Professor H. N. Morse of Johns Hopkins University, he

published important papers on the oxides of manganese.

It was his successful adaptation of the contact process for the manufacture of sulfuric acid that first brought Dr. Reese to the attention of the du Pont Company. As a result of this work, the Company employed him to take charge of their acid manufacturing operations and his chemical training and ability quickly led to an extension of his responsibilities to the study and improvement of the formula of commercial dynamites.

Upon his engagement in 1902, he established the Eastern Laboratory of the du Pont Company, one of the pioneering industrial research organizations, becoming the Director of this Laboratory. In 1911 the organization of the Chemical Department of the du Pont Company occurred with Dr. Reese at its head. Aably assisted by such men as Dr. Wm. Weedon and Dr. Wm. M. Whitten and other men of outstanding ability, a policy was initiated and consistently followed of employing young graduate chemists and building up a research organization. This staff, composed largely of young, well trained research personnel, proved of surpassing value during the following years. At one time, during the World War, the force of chemists employed by the du Pont Company numbered twelve hundred.

Dr. Reese was elected a Director of the du Pont Company on October 31, 1917. In the following year he was made a Director of du Pont American Industries, Inc. Dr. Reese served as President of the American Chemical Society in 1934, having been made chairman of the Society's board of directors in 1930.

Among other offices which he held were president of the Manufacturing Chemists' Association, vice-president of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, president of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, asso-

ciate member of the Naval Consulting Board, member of the visiting committee of the Bureau of Standards, and president of the Lalor Foundation. In the National Research Council, he was vice-chairman of the division of chemistry and chemical technology and vice-chairman of the research information service.

He served on the advisory boards of the Chemical Warfare Service and the Alcohol Trades Advisory Commission. He was a member of the Deutsche Chemische Gesellschaft, the Institution of Chemical Engineers of Great Britain, the Royal Society of Arts, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Franklin Institute, and the American Philosophical Society.

The University of Heidelberg awarded him the honorary degree of doctor of science in 1936 on the fiftieth anniversary of his first doctorate degree. He had received the honorary degree of Sc.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Delaware, Colgate University, and Wake Forest College. The University of Virginia chapter of Phi Beta Kappa made him an honorary member in 1920.

His clubs included the Chemists' Club of New York, the Wilmington Country Club, and the Church Club of Delaware. Dr. Reese's non-professional interests were broad, embracing music and the arts. He had served the Wilmington Society of Fine Arts as president.

Surviving are his wife, the former Harriet Stedman Bent; four sons, Charles Lee Reese, Jr., of Greenville, Del.; D. Meredith, of Washburn, Wis.; John S., of Wilmington, Del.; and Eben Bent, of Seaford, Del.; also a sister, Miss Virginia Reese, of Baltimore.

The Board of Directors of the du Pont Company on April 15 adopted a resolution expressing profound sorrow at the death of Dr. Reese and recapitulating his record of achievement.

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