

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Physics Community Remembers Dr. E. Leonard Jossem



August 31, 2009, College Park, MD—Dr. E. Leonard (Len) Jossem passed away Saturday, August 29, 2009. He served as AAPT President from 1973-74. Warren Hein, AAPT Executive Office, said, “Len was a champion of physics education and a long-time supporter of AAPT. He was generous when it was most critical to the success of our programs. We have lost a very good friend.”

Born in Camden, NJ, May 19, 1919, Dr. E. Leonard Jossem received his B.S. in Physics from City College of New York in 1938. During World War II he was a member of the scientific staff at Los Alamos in the Advanced Developments Division. He received his master’s degree in 1939 from Cornell University. His Ph.D., also from Cornell University in 1950, was for his research on experimental condensed matter physics. His long and productive career included nine years on the faculty at Cornell University, and two years with the commission on College Physics. In 1956 he joined the physics faculty at The Ohio State University where he taught for thirty-three years, serving as the Chairman of OSU’s Physics Department from 1967-1989. The department is well known for its efforts in ensuring that all graduate students are introduced to and schooled in the good practices of exemplary teaching. This program is part of the legacy of Len Jossem.

Jossem was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the New York Academy of Sciences, the Royal Academy of Arts, and the Institute of Physics [London]. He held the Howard E. Maxwell Award for Distinguished Service to the Ohio Section of the American Physical Society.

An active member of the American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT) since 1948, Jossem received the AAPT Distinguished Service Award in 1970, the Melba Newell Phillips Award in 1985, and the Oersted Medal in 1994. In presenting the medal, James H. Stith noted, “Leonard Jossem is a master teacher and educator in the broadest sense of the word.”

Long interested in physics education, he was a member of the Commission on College Physics, serving as chair from 1966 to 1971, during which time the commission’s work fundamentally changed the way physics was taught in this country. In 1995 Jossem was awarded the International Commission on Physics Education Medal for Excellence. He is an editor of the International Commission on Physics Education books, *Connecting the Results of Research in Physics Education with Teacher Education*, and *Physics 2000: Physics at It Enters a New Millennium*.

His volunteer service to AAPT included chairing and working on many AAPT committees including, most recently, the Committee on Teacher Preparation 2003-04, the Investment Advisory Committee 2005-06, and the Committee on the Interests of Senior Physicists 2005-06.

He was a consultant for UNESCO projects in Thailand, and a consultant for the World Bank-Chinese University Development Project in China. He holds honorary professorships in Physics at Beijing Normal University, at Beijing Teachers College, and at Southeast University in Nanjing, China. Deeply involved in International Physics

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Education, he was recognized on his 70th birthday in an International Newsletter on Physics Education article, "He is at home in schools as well as in research laboratories, he moves among students and teachers as naturally as among professors and Nobel laureates. To have a teaching career with such a fresh innovative spirit during half a century—this is a privilege only a few of the greatest can enjoy."

In his 90 years of life Dr. E. Leonard Jossem set a standard for generations of physics students and teachers that incorporates learning through play and exploration as the pathway to understanding. He will be especially remembered for his kindness, compassion, and contributions as a peacemaker.

About AAPT: AAPT (www.aapt.org) is the leading organization for physics educators—with more than 10,000 members worldwide. Our mission is to advance the greater good through physics teaching. We provide our members with many opportunities for professional development, communication, and student enrichment. We serve the larger community through a variety of programs and publications. AAPT was founded in 1930 and is headquartered in the American Center for Physics in College Park, Maryland.

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