



E-Newsletter | December 2013

New Jersey Inventors Hall of Fame

Two women who are profiled in our book *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America* were honored during the recent New Jersey Inventors Hall of Fame Ceremony. This month we are pleased to feature them: Beatrice Hicks, who posthumously received the Advancement of Invention Award, and Shirley Ann Jackson, who received the Trustees Award.

Beatrice Hicks broke new ground for women as an engineer, inventor and engineering executive. At age 13, inspired by the Empire State Building and the George Washington Bridge, she told her engineer father that she, too, would become an engineer. She was the first woman engineer employed by Western Electric Company. Her many achievements include her pioneer work in the theoretical study, analysis, development and manufacture of sensing devices, her patent of a molecular density scanner, and that she developed an industry model for quality control procedures.

In 1955, she became president of the firm founded by her father, Newark Controls, Inc., which designed and manufactured environmental sensing equipment, much of which was used in the space program. In 1950, she was chosen as the first president of the newly organized Society of Women Engineers. Hicks was awarded honorary doctorates by Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Stevens Institute of Technology, among others.



Beatrice Hicks



Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson

Hicks received patent number 3,046,369 for a device to sense gas density. The gas density switch was designed to monitor gas leakage, particularly for artificial atmospheres around electronic equipment. Her switch was used on aircraft and missiles, on the Boeing 707 and the Hustler B-58, in fire extinguishers, and on power transformers.

Hicks was honored with the Advancement of Invention Award from the New Jersey Inventors Hall of Fame "For inventions and discoveries related to gas density sensors, their market use and applications worldwide, and for promoting women in the field of engineering." Her many awards included

election to the National Academy of Engineering in 1978 as well as her induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Called by Time Magazine "perhaps the ultimate role model for women in science", theoretical physicist Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson is the second woman we profile this month. Jackson has demonstrated extraordinary leadership of and contributions to the scientific community, government, universities, industries and future generations of science and engineering professionals. She has advocated for women, especially minority women, in the areas of science, education, and public policy.

Jackson believes that in most of the world, science and technology need to be seen as "the key to being players on the world stage." She received the Karl Taylor Compton Award in 1970 for her leadership in establishing MIT's Black Student Union. Although she was accepted to do graduate work at other leading institutions, Dr. Jackson remained at MIT for her doctoral studies because she wanted to encourage the enrollment of more black students there. In this she was successful, as the number of blacks entering MIT during her time there went from 2 to 57.

Jackson is a woman of many "firsts." She was the first woman and the first African American to chair the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). She was the first African-American woman elected to the National Academy of Engineering and the first African-American to receive the Vannevar Bush Award. She is the first African-American woman to lead a top-

50 national research university (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute). In addition to 52 honorary degrees, Jackson has been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

We salute these women whose inventions and technical accomplishments have helped lead to the quality of life and standard of living that we are privileged to enjoy today.

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Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America
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