



## VALLEY OF THE GIANTS

by Elwyn Treat



**Charles Otterbein Adams**

Charles O. (Charlie) Adams was born in Dayton, Ohio, in 1912. His parents were Charles Winfred Adams and Viola Hicks Adams. His father worked as a secretary for Charles Kettering. Sometimes his father would take young Charlie to DELCO on Saturdays and Mr. Kettering would take time from his busy day to chat with Charlie. What an experience for a young boy! It's no wonder that Charlie decided to become an engineer.

Graduating from Steele High School in 1930, he enrolled as a co-op student at the University of Cincinnati. It was an excellent way

to get a well-rounded education, especially during the depression. He received an Electrical Engineering degree in 1937. His last co-op job was in Process Engineering at DELCO Products where he accepted his first full-time job. One of his first assignments was to make plant layouts for a new G.M. Division, Electromotive, being built in Chicago.

His next assignment set the direction for the remainder of his career, for he was destined to become a welding expert. The task was to find out why the leakage rate was increasing in resistance seam-welded shock absorber production. It took midnight hours studying welding engineering, and the electrical power buss system supplying all resistance welders, phasing and reconnecting all machines to equalize phase loads.

As World War II approached, DELCO had to get ready to make aircraft landing struts, auxiliary electric generators for the Navy, and other war gear. Peak production was required 50 times as high as existing suppliers could produce. Quality requirements were high and no certified welders were available to hire. Charlie set an example for the workers by passing both Air Force and Navy Certification tests. In many ways, Charlie acted as an overall coordinator or program manager for this major aircraft equipment.

After 1948, Charlie used his welding engineering background as a manufacturer's representative for National Electric Welding Machines Company, later known as Newcor. Helping to conceive, sell and follow-up automated, custom-engineered, fabricating and welding machines in automated production lines was both challenging and worthwhile. Charlie was recognized in the industry for his innovative ability, knowledge and integrity.

He put on seminars teaching resistance welding theory and

practice to Montgomery and Miami County Joint Vocational High School welding classes.

After retiring in 1976, he taught welding metallurgy part time at Hobart School of Welding Technology for three years and passed on practical experience that is not available in most text books.

Charlie has not slowed down since he turned 80 in 1992. He has taken on the job of promoting electrical vehicles in the Miami Valley as a major project of the Engineers Club Barn Gang. Like an unofficial ambassador-at-large he has encouraged and prodded any person or organization that could speed up the development of electrical vehicles in order to reduce pollution and dependence on foreign oil. He has provided many speakers, tours of plants, meetings with university personnel, and excellent articles for the *Engineer* publication. His proposal, with the help of Chuck Dempsey, for the Electrical Vehicle National Planning and Design Competition included ideas that will make electrical vehicles practical.

Over the years, Charlie has also given his best to promote civic, community and church-related life. Currently, he is a well-known speaker giving a slide presentation of the 1913 flood and subsequent Miami Conservancy District Flood Prevention work. He is an active member of John W. Durst Masonic Lodge #716, A.A.S.R., Valley of Dayton, and continues to be a driving force in Normandy United Methodist Church which he helped found.

Charles and his wife of 57 years, Loraine have three children: Nancy Jo, Jeanne and James Charles and seven grandchildren.

Charles Adams was the Engineers Club 1994 Deeds/Kettering Award recipient. Always the professional, always the gentleman, always a man of exemplary character, we are proud to add his name to the roll of **Valley of the Giants**.