



HISTORICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

## VALLEY OF THE GIANTS



**BAYARD D. KUNKLE**

From the time he was graduated from Pennsylvania State College in 1908 with the degree of Electrical Engineer, Bayard D. Kunkle, General Motors vice-president, who became group executive in charge of GM's Dayton divisions and household appliance divisions elsewhere, had been intimately associated with development and growth of manufacturing enterprises. Mr. Kunkle was a resident of Dayton for eight years, when he was an executive of two different GM

divisions here. He had been a General Motors vice-president 1939-1949.

Born in Steelton, Pa., on October 30, 1882, Mr. Kunkle was 26 when he received his Electrical Engineering degree at Pennsylvania State College. His first job following graduation was that of plant electrician for the Electric and Valley Traction Company at Lemoyne, Pa., but his interest in the design and development of products and in manufacturing techniques asserted itself with the result that on January 1, 1910, Mr. Kunkle joined the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company at East Pittsburgh, Pa. During his six years with Westinghouse, Mr. Kunkle served in various jobs concerned with the design and construction of starting, lighting, and ignition equipment for motor cars. Here, he had his first experience with the development of products but the ensuing years brought still further knowledge in this field to which he had devoted virtually his entire business career.

When he left Westinghouse in 1916, Mr. Kunkle became superintendent and chief engineer for the Caskey-Dupree company at Marietta, Ohio. His association with this company continued until April, 1922. World War I was fought while Mr. Kunkle was with the Caskey-Dupree organization, and during the war he served a chairman of the manufacturers' committee of the Grenade Association.

Mr. Kunkle resigned from Caskey-Dupree to become assistant superintendent in charge of manufacture of automotive equipment for Westinghouse, at the Company's East Springfield, Mass., plant. He remained in that position until March 1, 1925.

On that date, Mr. Kunkle joined the General Motors corporation and continued in various

executive capacities with the organization.

His first assignment with General Motors was that of superintendent of the Klaxon Horn division of the Remy Electric Company at Anderson, Indiana. Slightly more than a year later, Mr. Kunkle was transferred to Dayton as an executive with the Delco-Remy plant.

A few months later, on January 1, 1927, exactly 17 years from the time he had first entered a field in which the primary purpose is to make and improve existing products and create new ones to advance the country's standard of living, Mr. Kunkle became a plant superintendent for what was then the Frigidaire corporation. At that time, Frigidaire had just divorced itself from Delco-Light and had become a separate corporate entity for the manufacture of a product whose growing usage revealed signs of the phenomenal electric refrigerator industry growth to come. Not quite two years later, and now, a member of our Engineers Club, Mr. Kunkle was named chief of the product engineering division of Frigidaire. Then, in November, 1929, he was appointed assistant general manager for Delco Products corporation, a post he was to hold until January 1, 1930, when he became Delco Products president and general manager.

A resident of Dayton for eight years, Mr. Kunkle, on May 15, 1934, moved to Detroit in an advancement that ultimately was to bring him a vice-presidency in the General Motors organization. At that time, Mr. Kunkle began a new job as assistant to C.E. Wilson, now president of General Motors, who then was a vice-president of the corporation. On April 1, 1937, Mr. Kunkle was appointed director of the manufacturing section of the operating

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## Valley of the Giants

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staff, a post dealing directly with the production of General Motors products. He carried on his duties as director of the manufacturing section in addition to serving as assistant to Mr. Wilson in charge of the accessory division.

Two years later, in May, 1939, Mr. Kunkle was made a vice-president of General Motors in charge of the accessory group, as director of the manufacturing staff and a member of the administration committee.

Named vice-president in charge of personnel in December, 1949, Mr. Kunkle, one year later, became vice-president in charge of the manufacturing staff, with headquarters in Detroit. In December, 1942, he

became vice-president in charge of the Cadillac, Oldsmobile, Pontiac, Canadian and Overseas divisions.

During World War II, he was a member of General Motors war administration committee. With his new assignment, Mr. Kunkle maintained residence in Detroit, but continued to be a frequent visitor to Dayton, and to maintain club membership until end of 1947.

Mr. Kunkle was another splendid example of the outstanding individuals who have helped our great Miami Valley to become what it is today – The Valley of the Giants!

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not looked on favorably," Spence recalls.

He offered to share with would-be entrepreneurs, three primary challenges he wrestled with while considering the launch of his business. "The first lesson is to allow those people who want to share with you how they feel about what you're doing – especially, if you're feeling very good and very confident. Hear the other side," he suggests. In his case, Spence said he "had to disconnect a little bit of his brain and let my intuitive self-guide me."

Secondly, if a venturist can't sustain himself or herself for up to one and a half years with savings, the plan should be reconsidered. "Finally," he said, "a complete risk assessment should be undertaken before the launch, which outlines all those things that you know are barriers to your success."

"When you put those three things together – and

if your gut says it really feels good – go! And when you go, you have to be fully ready for the battle." Spence knows something about that. He credits his military training with learning leadership skills. He continues as a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve.

Among trends affecting small business, Spence believes the Downtown Dayton Partnership's initiative to develop a business incubator "is very significant, by providing a support base for people with great ideas to go in and have some sense of security. I think we're going to see more and more people going into small business. They have little choice," he said, "as jobs with big businesses are no longer there."

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