

# Fritz Russ had mark of 'a very rare and special CEO'

By Hardy Trolander, Engineers Club Fellow  
Founder and former CEO, YSI Inc.

Fritz Russ, who with his wife, **Delores**, founded Systems Research Laboratory (SRL) and developed it into a substantial technology-based company, was himself an excellent engineer and businessman.

I first met Fritz in 1958, and we established a long-standing friendship based in large part on our mutual interest in involving our respective companies in the development of new technology.

He was also committed to strengthening the importance of engineering and its perception in our society. He did this not only through his efforts at SRL but also by helping SRL's employees start their own technology-based companies.

Nowadays, encouraging and helping an employee to start his own company instead of trying to hold onto the employee is a mark of a very rare and special CEO.

More than a dozen companies were started by SRL employees with Fritz's full support and blessing. It was fitting, then, that about five years ago Fritz was given a surprise party by all of those former employees, including the heads of Universal Energy Systems, Ohio Electronic Engravers, Systech Environmental and many others. It was a very well earned tribute to an extraordinary individual.

## Newsletter submissions welcome from members

To submit articles or art for publication in the *Engineers Club News*, contact Editor **Kay Wert Minardi** at (937) 299-2454 or [kay.minardi@earthlink.net](mailto:kay.minardi@earthlink.net).



Photo by Dick Palmer

Delores and Fritz Russ, at the Club last year with Hardy Trolander, right, following a breakfast to commemorate an earlier awarding of the Fritz and Delores Russ Prize. The Russes, Club members since 1958, endowed the \$500,00 award, one of the top three engineering awards in the world. It is modeled after the Nobel Prize and granted every other year. Trolander served on the Awards Committee that in 2003 gave the prize to Willem Kolff, regarded as the father of artificial organs, including the first kidney dialysis machine and the heart-lung machine.

## Russ known as 'wellspring for engineering firsts'

Fritz J. Russ, who died Nov. 3 at age 84, "could be called a wellspring for engineering firsts," wrote the *Dayton Daily News*. "With two engineering schools and an international prize bearing his name, he is widely recognized for his inspirations not only in electrical engineering, but also in promoting and advancing the field."

Mr. Russ, who was appointed by President Gerald Ford to the president's committee on science, was a pioneer in the field of electrical engineering. He helped lead breakthroughs in television technology, atomic weapons-testing systems, engine controls, aircraft weaponry, space flight and medical technology.



# the ENGINEERS CLUB news

March, 2003

Dayton, Ohio

Birthplace of Aviation

Where professionals connect

## BARN GANG PROGRAMS

Tuesdays

Lunch: 11 a.m. - noon

Program: noon - 1:00 p.m.

March 4

*"Getting the Most from a PDA - Personal Digital Assistant"*

Rob Miller and Rob Frank, i-Zone

Introduction by Hap Cawood

March 11

*"Serenades in Brass"*

Donald Huff, Director  
Valley Brass Quintet

Introduction by Dick Palmer

March 18

*"What is News"*

James Cummings, DDN  
Columnist - Home Repair

Introduction by David Brewer

March 25

*"Community Oriented Policing Enforcement"*

Major Kenton Rainey, Dayton  
Police Department

Introduction by Gloria Todd

April 1

*"Bringing a WWII LST Home"*

Hike Nedeff, Navy Veteran  
Introduction by Ron Folkert

April 8

*"Life at the South Pole"*

Kelly Kaletsky, Meteorologist -  
Ohio EPA

Introduction by Dick Palmer

April 15

*"Generation 2001 - Shifting Aspirations"*

Jim Marker, Managing Partner  
The Marker Group

Introduction by Harry  
Prestanski

## New look, new approach

This newsletter represents the first step in the Marketing Committee's attempt to broaden our communications. Our aim is to provide a compact source of Club news monthly, and also post it on <http://engineersclub.org>. In addition, we would like to produce a larger newsletter, quarterly or bi-monthly, in the multi-page format.

## Mrs. Virginia Kettering, at the heart of the Club

Philanthropist and widow of Eugene Kettering, the son of the Club's co-founder Charles Kettering, **Virginia Kettering** was an enormously constructive force for Dayton. Mrs. Kettering, who died Feb. 18, was a Fellow of the Club, a lead donor for the restoration work on our historic building, and a friend in ways large and small, with a refined influence hard to measure. Appreciative of the Kettering legacy that permeates our history and mission, we salute her and her family.

## The Fritz and Delores Russ Prize

One of the top three top engineering awards in the world, the **Fritz and Delores Russ Prize**, was awarded to Willem Kolff, regarded as the father of artificial organs. In occupied Holland during World War II, Mr. Kolff invented the first kidney dialysis machine, and later the heart-lung machine, among other breakthroughs. Club members since 1958, Fritz and Delores Russ endowed the \$500,000 award, modeled after the Nobel Prize and granted every other year. Serving on the Awards Committee was **Hardy Trollander**, a Fellow of the Engineers Club.

## Welcome these new members

- **Select International Corp.**, of Dayton, under the ownership of **Robert Whited**. Other new members from Mr. Whited's **Select International** team include **Tom W. Lambdin**, president, and **Gregory Neal Rank**, director of sales, as well as **Fred William Scheidweiler**, president of Select Tool and Die.
- **Steven G. Austin**, an environmental staff associate with Concurrent Technologies Corporation.
- **Ronald C. Decker**, program manager at **Universal Technology Corporation**, a corporate member. Mr. Decker is active in Western Ohio Woodworkers and the Dayton Microcomputer Association.
- **Marcus D. Relthford**, a University of Dayton law student and president of UD's Student Bar Association.
- **Larry C. Jenkins**, a technical expert for the Aerospace Environmental Management System for the U.S. Air Force's Aeronautical System Center. He also is a member of the Society of American Engineers, the i-Zone, and is 2003 chairperson of the Affiliate Society Council's leadership committee.
- **Karl F. Weidnel**, Cincinnati Bell Telephone's general manager for the Dayton market. Mr. Weidnel also is chairman of Tri-State Habitat for Humanity.

Special on Orville Wright's 'pilot's license' ends March 31.