

In Memoriam Dolores H. Russ

July 20, 1921 – January 1, 2008

Dolores H. Russ, treasured friend and longtime benefactor of Ohio University and the Fritz J. and Dolores H. Russ College of Engineering and Technology, died New Year's Day in Naples, Florida, her winter home. She was 86.

Born in Jackson County, Ohio, on July 20, 1921, Dolores was married for 62 years to the late Ohio University electrical engineering alumnus Fritz Russ, who preceded her in death in 2004 at the age of 84.

The Russes were a lifelong team that co-founded one of the nation's largest independent engineering and high-tech research firms and dedicated their lives to engineering education. Their passion led them to help build state-of-the-art engineering programs and facilities at Ohio University as well as at Wright State University and Cedarville University, also in Ohio.

"Thousands of students and faculty members benefited from Dolores and Fritz's generosity," said Dennis Irwin, dean of the Russ College. "Perhaps most significant, though, was their dream to encourage innovation in engineering because of their belief that the appropriate role of engineering is to improve life."

Fritz's vision and technical expertise spanned an engineering career of more than 55 years and many engineering firsts, and Dolores was an equal partner in their decisions.

In the early 1950s, they founded Knollwood Electronics in the basement of their home. In 1955, they established Systems Research Laboratories in Beavercreek, Ohio, their summer home; they dug the foundation and built the framework together. With Dolores serving as secretary-treasurer, they shared the only telephone through a window adjoining their offices.

SRL specialized in electronics, lasers, and artificial intelligence, and had about 1,000 employees when the Russes merged it with Arvin Industries Inc. in 1987.

The Russes' civic activities included seats on the National Aviation Hall of Fame board of trustees. Wright State University awarded them both honorary doctorate degrees in 2002.



Above:
Fritz, B.S.E.E. '42, and Dolores Russ

Below:
Dolores Russ speaks at the June 25, 1994, celebration naming the College of Engineering and Technology for she and her husband, Fritz Russ, B.S.E.E. '42.

Their involvement with Ohio University as a couple dates to the '70s. In 1973, Fritz joined the College of Engineering and Technology Board of Visitors. The following year, he was appointed to the Ohio University Foundation Board of Trustees. Dolores accompanied him to every meeting.

In 1994, the University's College of Engineering was renamed the Fritz J. and Dolores H. Russ College of Engineering and Technology in honor of the Russes' dedication and commitment to engineering education at Ohio University.

The Russes endowed the National Academy of Engineering Russ Prize, one of the top three engineering prizes in the world, in 1999. The prize has been awarded to the co-inventors of the implantable heart pacemaker, the inventors of kidney dialysis and the first blood oxygen sensor, and most recently to the "father" of modern biomechanics.

That year, Ohio University honored Dolores with an honorary alumna award.

In 2004, the Russes received the Founders Citation—the highest honor the Board of Trustees presents—for exemplary service to Ohio University.

In recent years, Dolores continued the couple's steadfast counsel and support for Ohio University and the Russ College.

Dolores was the daughter of the late Willard and Stella (Anderson) Houser. In addition to her husband and parents, she was preceded in death by her stepmother, Hazel Brunton Houser, and only brother, Floyd Houser. She is survived by two sisters, Betty Pomeroy and Emma Houser; a brother-in-law, Richard Pomeroy; a sister-in-law, Mildred Russ Crum; and other relatives and friends.

Funeral services were at Eisnaugle-Lewis Funeral Home in Jackson, Ohio. Burial was at Fairmont Cemetery.

Plans for an Ohio University memorial service will be announced when complete.

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