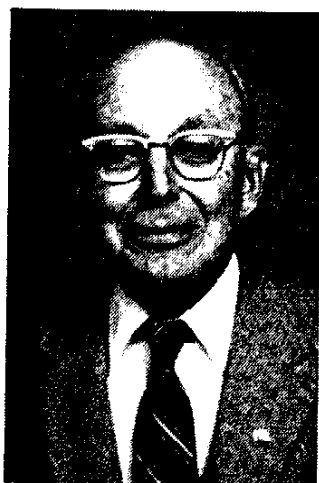


H-12. June 13, 1988
William Oelke memorial set



William Oelke Jr.

William C. Oelke Jr., 81, professor emeritus of chemistry at Grinnell College, died Friday evening, June 10, at the Mayflower Home Health Care Center after a lengthy illness.

A memorial service will be conducted at 2 p.m. Tuesday at the Grinnell United Church of Christ-Congregational. Friends may contribute to the William C. Oelke Memorial Fund, and gifts may be directed to the Smith Funeral Home.

He was born Oct. 11, 1906, in Corwith, Iowa. He attended public schools at Corwith and Goldfield, later studying at Grinnell College from which he received the A.B. degree in 1928 with a major in chemistry. Receiving a fellowship at Holy Cross College in Worcester, Mass., he did graduate work there and earned the M.S. degree, cum laude, in 1929. He remained at Holy Cross on the faculty for two additional years, teaching general chemistry. On Sept. 2, 1930, he was married to Martha Jones, also a chemist and former classmate at Grinnell.

He earned the Ph.D. degree from the University of Iowa in 1935. In 1931 he came to Grinnell College to begin his 42-year tenure as an instructor, later becoming a full professor and serving as chairman of the department from 1948 to 1961. He served as the William F. Dodge professor of chemistry from 1963 to 1973 when he was named professor emeritus.

The author of several research papers and textbooks in analytical and physical chemistry, he is perhaps more famous among his former students for his creative ideas in the development of laboratory instrumentation and his ability to make things work properly in the lab.

He was a designer of the Oelke-Grinnell Student Potentiometer manufactured by Wilkens-Anderson Co. and of the Universal Electrode Kit of Kontes Glass Co.

Prof. Oelke was an active member of the American Chemical Society for more than 50 years and was an honorary member of the Iowa Academy of Science, which he had served as president. He was awarded one of the first Distinguished Fellow awards by the Iowa Academy of Science in 1975.

He served the United Church of Christ as Sunday school superintendent and keeper of audio-visual equipment and was a member of the church's building committee. He was a member of the Fortnightly Club, the Isaac Walton League, and the Museum Board.

Surviving are his wife, Martha; three children, Betty Holt of Stillwater, Minn.; Nancy Hillman of Baton Rouge, La.; and William H. Oelke of Waterville, Minn.; six grandchildren; and one grandchild.