

1981 Engineer of Distinction



James Manson Henderson
B.S. Civil Engineering, UT-Knoxville, 1922
M.S. Civil Engineering, UT-Knoxville, 1924

Posthumous: 1896-1980
Dean of Engineering Emeritus
Tennessee Technological University
Cookeville, Tennessee

Citation

James Manson Henderson, born May 28, 1896, in Yorkville, Tennessee, received a B.S. degree in civil engineering from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville in 1922 and an M.S. in civil engineering in 1924.

In 1924, Mr. Henderson became head of a fledgling engineering department at Tennessee Polytechnic Institute (now Tennessee Technological University). He launched engineering at Tech with two faculty members and a borrowed surveyor's transit. He served the University for 42 years, becoming the first dean of engineering in 1949, a position which he held until 1961.

Dean Henderson conceived and initiated a unique annual-rotation cooperative education program in 1959. His model has since been copied by other institutions. After retiring as dean, he coordinated the co-op program until leaving university service at age 70 in 1966.

A registered professional engineer, Dean Henderson was a life member of the American Society for Engineering Education. He was a member of the National Society of Professional Engineers, the Tennessee Education Association and the National Education Association.

Well known for his civic and church activities, Dean Henderson was a charter member of the committee which established Cookeville's first youth center in 1944. He was a counselor to the Boy Scouts of America. Active in the First United Methodist Church, he served as general superintendent of the church's schools, director of religious education and chairman of the church building committee. He was a member of the Cookeville Rotary Club and served as its president. He was a veteran of World War I, an Excellent High Priest in the Cookeville Masonic Lodge and a member of the American Legion.

Dean Henderson was a quiet man—a man whose influence will be felt for decades. Engineering at Tennessee Tech is what it is today because of the foundation laid by J.M. Henderson.



1981 Engineers of Distinction: (l to r) Dean Emeritus James Seay Brown, Mrs. Henderson for her late husband, James M. Henderson, Aubrey Wagner, Landon Corbin, George Jasny