

1987 Engineer of Distinction



Charles O. Glisson

B.S. Engineering, US Naval Academy, 1921

M.S. Engineering, MIT, 1929

Sc.D. Engineering, MIT, 1930

Posthumous: 1897-1972

Professor Mechanical Engineering Emeritus

Tennessee Technological University

Cookeville, Tennessee

Citation

Charles Olan Glisson was born and reared on a farm in West Tennessee. He attended local schools, finishing high school in only two years. Wanting to go to the U.S. Naval Academy and lacking political or other influential contacts to help him at that time, he enlisted in the Navy on June 23, 1917. He went through boot camp at the Great Lakes Naval Station and began his shipboard assignments in the boilerroom. Soon thereafter, he took the special examination for enlisted men in the Navy, winning an appointment to Annapolis in 1917.

During his sophomore year at the Academy, he fell victim to the great flu epidemic which was fatal to many thousands at that time. He was unable to attend classes for several months. It was only by diligent effort—and his gift for quick learning and remarkable retention—that he was able to remain with his class, graduating in 1921.

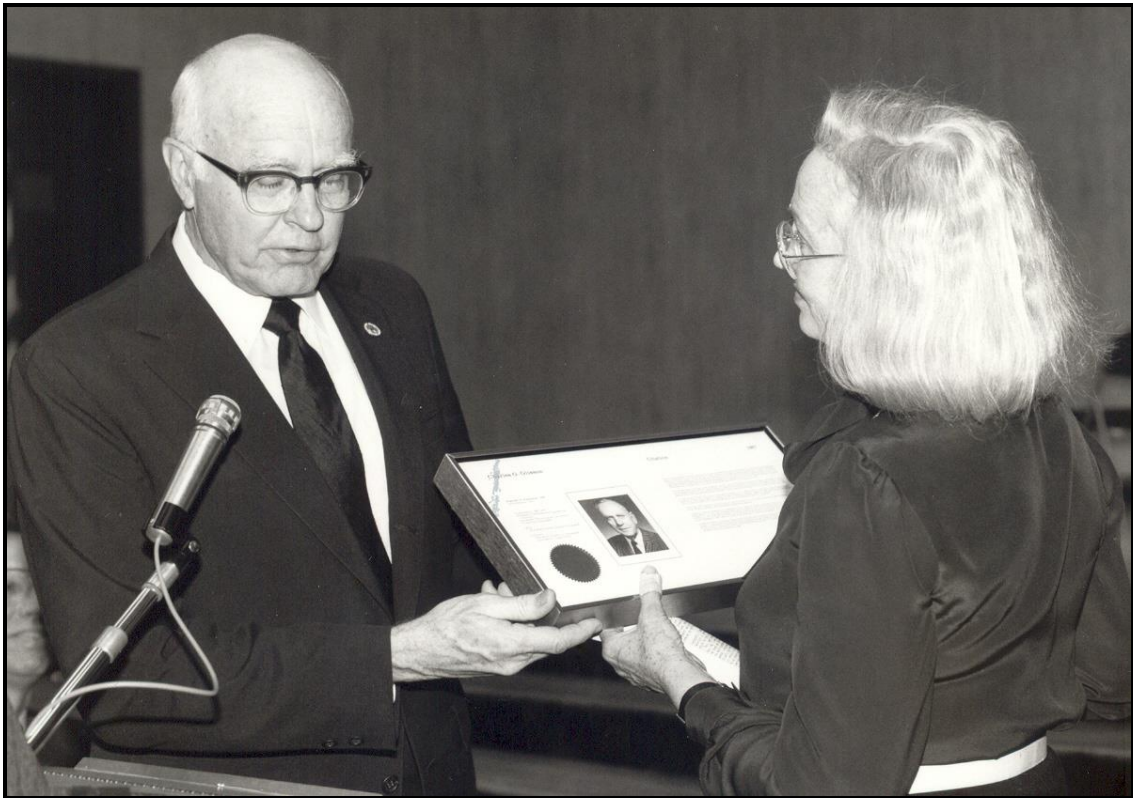
In 1927, he went to the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School and, in 1928, the Navy sent him to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for graduate study. He earned a master's degree in 1929 and a Doctor of Science (Sc.D.) degree in 1930. His doctoral dissertation was on guidance systems for torpedoes.

Following a distinguished career of some 35 years in the Navy, he retired as Captain in 1952. He was a certified naval ordnance engineer and a registered professional engineer.

On the day after graduation from Annapolis, June 3, 1921, Dr. Glisson married a vivacious young beauty from Washington, D.C., Ella Maria Gerber. They were married for fifty-one years and had two children,

Charles Olan Glisson, Jr., and Janet Maria Glisson. It was the heartbreak of their lives that their son, who graduated from the Naval Academy in 1947, was lost off the coast of Korea in his Navy jet fighter on November 1, 1952.

In 1956, Dr. Glisson joined the Tennessee Tech faculty as Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering. Very quickly in his second career he developed a reputation as "Mr. Thermo," and his students affectionately referred to him as "Doc." He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1958, to Professor in 1967. He remained devoted to his students until his retirement in 1969.



Dean Emeritus James Seay Brown presents Janet Buck with the posthumous Engineer of Distinction Award in honor of her late father, Dr. Charles O. Glisson, who was professor of mechanical engineering