

## Ann E. Wright, Ph.D. (1922 – 2016)



- ◆ Ann was the first female:
  - *Officer in the AAPM (Treasurer, 1974 – 1976)*
  - *President of the AAPM (in 1982)*
  - *Chair of the Board of Chancellors of the ACMP (in 1984)*
  - *Winner of the Marvin M. D. Williams Award (in 1991)*

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## But it was not easy!

- ◆ She was outstanding at mathematics at high school but the physics teacher would not allow her to take his physics class
  - *(girls couldn't do physics!)*
- ◆ The math teacher eventually persuaded him to allow her into his class
- ◆ But he said she could not do any practical lab classes involving electricity *(too dangerous for girls!)*
- ◆ And, regardless of her record, *he would fail her*
- ◆ Ultimately, however, he softened and gave her a "D"!

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## Shell Oil Company

- ◆ Upon graduation she obtained a scholarship to study physics at the University of Houston
- ◆ Unfortunately, she had to go to work instead for family financial reasons
- ◆ She went to work for the Shell Oil Company doing clerical work but was soon promoted to work as an accountant
- ◆ Shell sent her on a course to study computer programming at IBM
  - *This changed her life forever*
- ◆ Since she would not be eligible for promotion without a degree, Shell gave her leave to pursue a B.S. degree in business at the University of Houston

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## University education

- While there, she took a physics course and did so well that her professor persuaded her to change her major to physics, even though she was just two courses short of graduating in business
- Her physics professor encouraged her to respond to a job opening at the MD Anderson to provide some additional income
- She was interviewed by Bob Shalek who, recognizing her unique talent in computer programming, offered her a part-time job while completing her B.S. studies
- She worked with Marilyn Stovall and helped her develop a database for brachytherapy data collection, analysis, and treatment planning calculations
- She completed her B.S. in physics in 1951 (*aged 39!*)

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## Medical Physics career

- Bob Shalek offered her an NCI scholarship to complete her studies
- She ultimately completed an M.S. and Ph.D. in medical physics
- Subsequently, she began her illustrious career as a medical physicist in Houston and Galveston, and in the AAPM and ACMP
- To name just a few more of her roles, she served as:
  - *Chair of the AAPM CRP Coordination Committee*
  - *AAPM Representative to the AIP Governing Board Executive Committee*
  - *Chair of the ACMP Licensure and Reimbursement Committees*
  - *Chair of the ACMP Professional Practice Commission*

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## Ann Wright's Legacy

- She will be remembered, not only as a great leader of the medical physics profession, but as a great role model for young women (*and men!*) entering our profession
- The medical physics profession is where it is today in large part due to her efforts
- Her influence will be felt for years to come
- Thank you Ann

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