Charles Concordia

VENICE, Fla. Charles Concordia, perhaps the world's best-known power systems engineer, died in Venice, Christmas night, December 25, 2003 after a short illness. He was 95 years old. Dr. Concordia was born June 20, 1908 in Schenectady, N.Y., third son of Francis and Suzie E. (Decker) Concordia. In 1926, as an honor student excelling in physics, he went straight from Schenectady High School to General Electric Company, also in Schenectady, where he worked in GE's general engineering laboratory. His first work was inventing a way of detecting cracks in railway tracks. Eight years later, in 1934, he graduated from the company's prestigious three-year advanced engineering program. Dr. Concordia began to focus on systems engineering and electric utility work, and became General Electric Company's consultant to public utilities around the world, advising them on systems protection and reliability. During World War II, his work included development and research on generators and turbines for Naval vessels, research on superchargers for airplanes, and helped develop the concept of electric drives for ships. In the 1940s, he chaired AIEE's subcommittee on large scale computing devices and continued his consulting work after the war. In 1947, he chaired the first committee on computing devices which eventually became the IEEE Computer Society. In the 1940s, he pioneered the idea that synchronous machines' voltage-regulator characteristics affect their stability and his synchronous concept has greatly contributed to the networking of electrical power systems around the world. He is renown for his book on synchronous machines. He has published 130 papers, and holds six patents. He earned a doctor of science from Union College and an honorary doctorate from Iowa State University. Some of the numerous awards and honors he received include the Lamme Medal, the Steinmetz Award, the Philip Sporn Award culminating in the IEEE Medal of Honor in 1999 For outstanding contributions in the area of power systems dynamics which resulted in substantial improvements in planning, operation, and security of extended power systems. Following retirement from GE in 1973 he continued working as a consultant for companies around the world up to the present. Dr. Concordia was a life member of IEEE, the American Association for The Advancement of Science and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. He was an honored member of the National Academy of Engineering and the National Society of Professional Engineers. In 2003, IEEE initiated the Charles Concordia Power Systems Engineering Award which recognizes major contributions to the development of high voltage power systems worldwide. He was married to the late Frances Butler for 53 years. Two nieces and four nephews survive him. A memorial service is planned for a later date.

Published in the Albany Times Union on 12/30/2003.

Back