

OBITUARY

Ted Rockwell (1922–2013)

Theodore “Ted” Rockwell was an amazing man, great friend, and a Full Member of the SSE. While best known to the world as a nuclear energy pioneer, he was intensely interested in spiritual matters and psychic research. For decades he successfully straddled both worlds and loved to “comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable.” The latter meant he frequently raised questions that often tended to bother conventional scientists.



For more than 65 years he worked in nuclear technology, and was a founding officer of the nuclear engineering firm MPR Associates, Inc. (he was the R), and of Radiation, Science, and Health, Inc. During World War II, Ted worked at the Manhattan atomic bomb project in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Continuing with the U.S. Navy in a civilian capacity after World War II, from 1949 to 1964 he worked at Naval Reactors Headquarters. The last 10 years of that assignment Ted served as Technical Director of Admiral Rickover’s program to build the nuclear Navy, including the design, building, and commissioning of the *USS Nautilus*, the world’s first nuclear-powered submarine. He also served as Director of President Eisenhower’s Atoms for Peace Program. There he was selected as one of the 13 official U.S. presentation volumes at the 1958 Atoms for Peace Conference in Geneva. Ted was instrumental in declassifying much of the relevant nuclear technology, and building the world’s first commercial atomic power station at Shippingport, Pennsylvania. Those efforts led to the World Nuclear Association Award for Distinguished Contribution to the Peaceful Worldwide Use of Nuclear Energy.

A member of the National Academy of Engineering, Ted was a Fellow of the American Nuclear Society and recipient of its first Lifetime Contribution Award, now known as the *Rockwell Award*. Nationally he received Distinguished Service Medals from both the U.S. Navy and the

U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. Ted was the only non-medical member of the Advisory Group on the National Artificial Heart Program (1966) and a member of the Advisory Council, Princeton University Department of Chemical Engineering (1966–1972). From 1965 to 1968, he was a Research Associate with the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (in connection with nuclear proliferation research). He was Chairman of the Atomic Industrial Forum’s Reactor Safety Task Force (1966–1972) and Consultant to the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy (1967). Sigma Xi selected him as the first Distinguished Lecturer sponsored by the National Academy of Engineering.

Ted held several patents, including one listed in “a selection of [27] landmark US atomic energy patents from all the patents issued to date.” His extensive writing includes several books and many technical papers. Many of them have been translated and published in foreign languages including German, Dutch, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. Demonstrating versatility, he also wrote three one-act plays that were professionally produced as a staged reading at Washington’s Source Theater.

While maintaining a high profile in the field of nuclear energy, Ted actively pursued his interests in spirituality and psi phenomena. Ted introduced me to another pioneer, Cleve Backster, leading to the replication of Backster’s work in primary perception. Ted also attended several of the key psychokinesis metal bending (PKMB) parties, lending his credibility in our attempt to influence senior officials as to the reality of psi phenomena. Ted was also instrumental in setting up an expedition including our families, as well as C. B. “Scott” Jones, to experiment with dolphins in their natural habitat in Bahamian waters. These experiments included attempted telepathic influence on the behavior of the pods we encountered and they appeared to have positive results. The self-imposed protocols dictated that we refrain from physical contact although allowed the wild dolphins to initiate interactions at extremely close proximity (less than an inch).

Always inquisitive, Ted participated in supporting several consciousness exploration organizations including the U.S. Psychotronics Association which studies the science of mind–body–environment relationships, an interdisciplinary science concerned with the interactions of matter, energy, and consciousness. The power of prayer was of interest to him and he followed closely the experiments of Spindrift Research which explores “consciousness and prayer with scientific methods.” He also served on the Science Advisory Board of the National Institute for Discovery Science. Privately he amassed an extensive collection of psi-related publications which he graciously donated to the Bigelow Collection in Las Vegas, Nevada.

JOHN ALEXANDER