
MEMORIAL

ROBERT R. SHROCK
(1904–1993)

Robert R. Shrock, an eminent geologist and professor emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, died on June 22, 1993, at the age of 88 after a long struggle with cancer.

Shrock was born in Wawpecong, near Kokomo, Indiana, on August 27, 1904, the son of Andrew Shrock and Stella Glassburn. He earned an A.B., M.A., and Ph.D. from Indiana University. He then joined the faculty of the University of Wisconsin and subsequently moved to MIT, where he stayed from 1937 until his retirement in 1975. His research in geology was concentrated in the areas of paleontology, sedimentology, and stratigraphy. Besides his articles in research journals, Shrock was the author of several well-known books, including *Index Fossils of North America* (with H. Shimer), *Sequence in Layered Rocks*, and *Principles of Invertebrate Paleontology* (the latter with W. Twenhofel). In the course of his research, Shrock discovered many new species of fossils, and several other fossils have been named in his honor. During World War II, he worked on the War Production Board. From 1949 until 1965 he was Chairman of the Department of Geology and Geophysics at MIT. Besides the accomplishments in geology during this period, he started a program of instruction and research in oceanography administered jointly by the department and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. A notable achievement during his chairmanship was the construction of a 20-story building for earth sciences, completed in 1965, with funds from the benefactor Cecil Green.

In addition to the fossils named for him, Shrock's awards and honors included Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (awarded 1954), President of the Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists (SEPM) (1956–1957), President of the American Association of Geology Teachers (1959), an additional honorary degree from Indiana University (1971), and the Twenhofel Medal from the SEPM (1976). He served as Corporation Member, Trustee, and Executive Committee member of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, which named an oceanographic research ship after him. He was a member of many professional geological societies and served on numerous review and visiting committees. Finally, the endowed Robert R. Shrock Professorship in the current Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences at MIT is named in his honor.

After his retirement, Shrock wrote two books on the history of geology: *The Geologists Crosby of Boston* and the two-volume work *Geology at MIT: 1865–1965*. His great energy and enthusiasm even toward the end of his life were further evidenced by



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his completion, at the age of 85, of the biography *Cecil and Ida Green: Philanthropists Extraordinary*.

Wendolyn T. Shrock and Robert E. Shrock
Northfield, Massachusetts and Setauket, New York