

Manhattan Project physicist dies

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Manhattan Project physicist William Shurcliff, who became a vocal opponent of President Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, has died at age 97.

Shurcliff, who also opposed development of supersonic transportation, died June 20 at his Cambridge, Mass., home, the Los Angeles Times reported Thursday. Shurcliff's granddaughter, Elizabeth Shurcliff, said he died from complications of pneumonia.

During his lifetime Shurcliff participated in a variety of causes, the Times reported, including a 1938 effort to bar German scientists from visits to U.S. laboratories, opposition to the development of three-dimensional commercial television, and support of solar power development.

He spent most of World War II working for the U.S. Office of Scientific Research, evaluating proposals and helping to keep Manhattan Project patents secret. After the war he worked for the Polaroid Co., receiving 20 patents for polarized light and other optical technologies, the newspaper said.

Shurcliff is survived by his wife of 65 years, two sons, and two granddaughters.

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