

Hybrid vehicle battery creator Ovshinsky, 89, dies

October 18 2012, by Corey Williams



This undated photo provided by the Ovshinsky family shows Stan Ovshinsky. Ovshinsky, the self-taught inventor who developed the nickel-metal hydride battery used in the hybrid vehicle industry, has died at his home in suburban Detroit after a fight with cancer, Wednesday, Oct. 17, 2012. He was 89. (AP Photo/Ovshinsky Family)

(AP)—Stan Ovshinsky, the self-taught inventor who developed the nickel-metal hydride battery used in the hybrid vehicle industry, has died at his home in suburban Detroit after a fight with cancer. He was 89.

Ovshinsky, who ran Energy Conversion Devices, a car battery development company, also created a machine that produced 9-mile-(14

1/2-kilometer)long sheets of thin solar energy panels intended to bring cheaper, cleaner power to homes and businesses.

His son, Harvey Ovshinsky, said his father was passionate about science and alternative energy, but also about civil rights and other social causes. He said his father died of complications from prostate cancer Wednesday night at his home in Bloomfield Hills.

"Here was a man who spent his youth and his adulthood determined to change the world," the younger Ovshinsky said. "That's not a 9-to-5 job. My father worked tirelessly 24-7, even up until he got sick, to change the world and its attitude toward sustainable energy and alternate platforms for information."

Stan Ovshinsky, for whom ovonics was named, made possible such technological discoveries as the solar-powered calculator. Ovonics changes the electrical resistance and structure of materials in response to sunlight.

He never went to college, yet he earned about 200 U.S. patents and was a fellow of the American Physical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He received numerous honorary degrees.

Born in Akron, Ohio, Ovshinsky and his late wife, Iris, founded Energy Conversion Devices Inc. in 1960. The company developed and applied his inventions to the fields of information and energy.

"Back then the environment was not a problem," he said in 2001. "The only answer is to generate new industry that answers the problems and provides jobs."

Prior to his death, Ovshinsky was nominated to receive the 2012 Hans

Bethe Award for his research and development in material science. He was to receive the honor next month.

But he was also committed to human and equal rights, and took part in labor, civil rights and peace movements, his son said.

"Civil rights or a ban on nuclear testing, he was passionate," Harvey Ovshinsky said. "Science was a key and so was civil rights and so was peace and so was equality. He would not give it up.

"As a father, he was really about the most supportive and encouraging person I've ever met. He always saw his colleagues' potential. He looked at people regardless of who they were to do the best he could to bring out the best in them."

Along with his son Harvey, Stan Ovshinsky is survived by his wife, Rosa; his other children, Ben, Dale, Robin, Steven, Angela and Vicki; six grandchildren; and his brother, Herb.

More information: Virtual memorial:

www.forevermissed.com/stanford-r-ovshinsky/

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