

# Physicist, former Caltech provost Christy dies

October 5 2012

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(AP)—California Institute of Technology officials say Robert F. Christy, a former professor and administrator who helped design the trigger mechanism for the atomic bombs used in World War II, has died. He was 96.

Caltech spokesman Douglas Smith says Christy died Wednesday. No cause was given.

Christy was one of the early recruits to the [Manhattan Project](#) at Los Alamos Laboratory. He was hand-picked by his University of California, Berkeley, professor J. Robert Oppenheimer in 1941.

The Canadian native devised what came to be known as the Christy bomb or Christy gadget, a plutonium implosion device.

At Caltech, he taught [theoretical physics](#) and went on to serve as faculty chair, vice president and provost, and acting president.

Later in life, he opposed the further development of nuclear weapons.

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