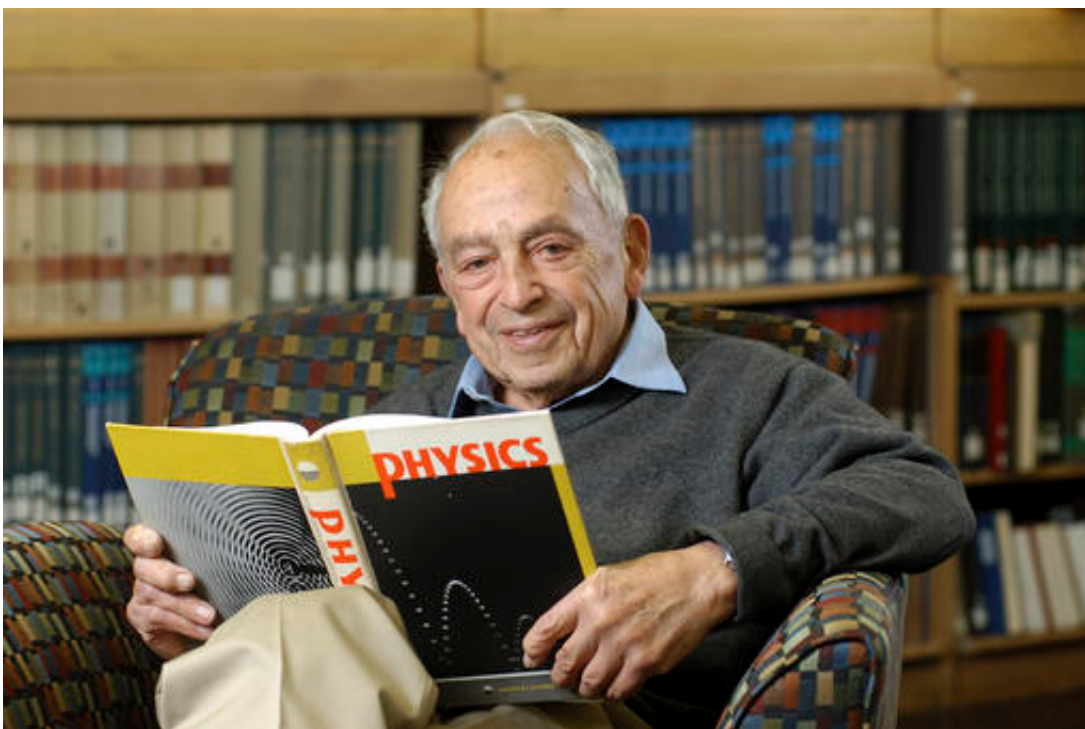


Fermi Lab co-founder, physicist Dr. Edwin Goldwasser dies (Update)

December 17 2016



This 2007 photo provided by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign shows Dr. Edwin Goldwasser in the Physics Library of the university. Goldwasser, a co-founder of Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory and one of the world's most prominent physicists, died Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2016, at the age of 97. (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign via AP)

Dr. Edwin Goldwasser, a co-founder of Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory and one of the world's most prominent physicists who spent

decades at the University of Illinois, has died at the age of 97.

The physics department at the Urbana-Champaign campus announced this week in a news release that Goldwasser, whose research helped explain nuclear force, died Wednesday.

"They almost broke the mold, I'm afraid," former chancellor Morton Weir told the (Champaign) News-Gazette (bit.ly/2gMDpmM).

Goldwasser started at the university in 1951, realizing eventually that Midwestern universities could graduate more physicists if there was a high-flight research facility in the region. Goldwasser was prominent enough to persuade President Lyndon Johnson to do just that and locate it in Illinois, not Wisconsin.

In 1967, he took a leave of absence to serve as deputy director for what became known as Fermilab in Batavia, Illinois, which does particle physics research and has contributed to major discoveries in medicine, energy and the origins of the universe.

Later during the Cold War, Goldwasser convinced President Richard Nixon to allow scientific exchanges with Soviet physicists. When the Soviets would not invite the recommended number of Israeli physicists to an international meeting in Tblisi, it was a threat by Goldwasser to cancel the meeting that persuaded the Soviets to give in.

Goldwasser returned to the university in 1978 as vice chancellor for research and dean of the Graduate College.

This week's release noted that at the time, Fermilab director Robert Wilson praised Goldwasser, saying, "The successes of the Laboratory, the firm foundation for the future, the cultural ambience, the spirit of opportunity for all, the international importance of our work, are all

monuments to his sense of the value of science and its place in our society."

Goldwasser held the title of vice chancellor for academic affairs from 1980 until his retirement in 1986. Four years later, he was appointed a "Distinguished Scholar" at the California Institute of Technology, and was a fellow of the American Physical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

On campus, Goldwasser was a familiar sight, riding his bike, playing tennis and attending lectures. He and his wife, Liza Weiss Goldwasser, were married for 76 years and had five children.

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