Homer Addams



The Homer Addams Award recognizes a graduate student who has been engaged in an ASHRAE research project. The award was authorized in June, 1956, and the first award was given in 1957. In June, 1959, the ASHRAE Board of Directors was pleased to receive a $10,000 endowment from Paul K. Addams, Homer Addams’ son. In 1991 the endowment of the award was increased to $25,000 and the honorarium was increased from $600 to $1500.The award also consists of a plaque and lapel pin.

Mr. Addams was born June 22, 1873, in Addamstown, Pennsylvania, a town established by his ancestors in the early 1700’s. He began his business career at the age of 15 after completion of preliminary education in public schools in the Addamstown area and in the Schuylkill Seminary. The desire for education was so great that he managed to combine business with study, taking business and engineering courses in his off hours.

His first job was as a helper, installing heating plants in Eastern Pennsylvania. In 1895, he joined Barber and Ross, a heating contracting firm in Washington, D.C. Mr. Addams handled development, engineering and research of the products for a group of cast-iron boiler manufacturers in Philadelphia in 1896. During that same year, he was a founder of The American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers.

In 1903 he was employed by the Kewanee Boiler Company of Illinois. He went to Washington as a special representative to contact government agencies and to act as a consultant on various heating projects. He rejoined the Kewanee Boiler Company in 1911 to set up a New York branch and also to serve as sales manager of the operation. From 1911-18, he spent much time in Washington as a liaison representative between the company and the government on the design and development of boilers and hot water heaters.

Foreseeing the extended growth of construction along the eastern seaboard and the prospect of sizeable business volumes, Mr. Addams joined with the Kewanee Boiler Company of Illinois in 1920 to form a subsidiary company known as the Kewanee Boiler Company of New York. His initial position with the new firm was Vice President, and in 1921 he became President. The same year he acquired the Fitzgibbons Boiler Company, of Oswego, New York, and also became its President. He resigned as President in 1947, and was succeeded by his son, Paul K. Addams. Concurrently, he became Chairman of the Board of the firm and pursued his responsibilities with the same fervor that marked his long and outstanding career.

Dr. Addams’ career closely paralleled that of ASHVE, being identified with the advancement of engineering practice, research and development techniques in the field of heating and air conditioning. He received the F. Paul Anderson Medal in 1952 in recognition of his notable contributions to the advancement of the fields of boiler design and performance.

In the 1951 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Science from Albright College.

Homer Addams served as ASHVE President in 1924. He also served as First Vice President, Treasurer and on the ASHVE Council. He was active in the founding of the Society’s Research Laboratory at the United States Bureau of Mines, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1919, and was a member of the first Guide Committee in 1922. He served ASHVE with many committee assignments

He also held membership in the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the American Uniform Boiler Low Society, the Steel Boiler Institute, Inc., the Engineers Club of New York, the Engineers Club of Philadelphia, and the Greenleaf Lodge, F. & A. M., Allentown, Pennsylvania.