

NY Times Obituary

Ernst Weber, 94, Who Oversaw Polytechnic University's Growth

By [WOLFGANG SAXON](#) FEB. 17, 1996

Dr. Ernst Weber, an electrical engineer who helped turn the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn into one of the nation's foremost science-engineering centers, Polytechnic University, died on Thursday at the Tryon Estates retirement community in Columbus, N.C. He was 94 and had moved from Mount Vernon, N.Y., 25 years ago.

He was the sixth president of Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, from 1957 to 1969, a period of remarkable growth and diversification. On the day of his inauguration, the school dedicated its new campus on Jay Street, a part of the Brooklyn Metrotech complex.

Ground was broken in 1960 for the Graduate Center in Farmingdale, Long Island's first graduate engineering school. Four years later, Dr. Weber announced a 10-year plan to develop the institute into a technological university with full-fledged divisions in the sciences, engineering, the humanities and scientific management.

In 1966, he unveiled the blueprints for the 18-story Academic Tower of classrooms and faculty offices on the Jay Street campus. More recently, Polytech added a third campus in Hawthorne, N.Y., in Westchester County.

By the end of his tenure, the institute's enhanced status was nationally recognized. It went on to absorb the engineering school of New York University and received approval for its formal name change to Polytechnic University in 1985.

The university also changed the name of its Microwave Research Institute in Dr. Weber's honor. He had founded it in 1945 and built it into a leading center of electronic research.

Ernst Weber was born in Vienna. Parallel interests in engineering and the humanities led him to train at the Technical University of Vienna while he studied philosophy, physics and mathematics at the University of Vienna.

He received doctorates from both institutions and worked as an electrical engineer for the big Siemens-Schuckert concern. When it transferred him to Berlin, he began lecturing at the Technical University there.

In 1930, he accepted an invitation to become a visiting professor at Brooklyn Polytech. The next year, he was named a permanent research professor of electrical engineering in charge of graduate studies.

He became department head in 1945 as well as director of the fledgling Microwave Research Institute, which grew from his wartime work on the calibration of radar and related military projects. He held some 30 patents in the field of microwave techniques, and wrote many scientific papers and two textbooks.

President Harry S. Truman awarded him a Presidential Certificate of Honor in 1948 and in 1987, President Ronald Reagan awarded him the National Medal of Science. He was also a member of the National Academy of Arts and Science.

Dr. Weber is survived by two stepdaughters, Hertha Flack-Monroe of Tryon, N.C., and Greta Neelson of Rio del Mar, Calif., 5 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren and a great-great-grandson.

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