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▶ ALUMNI WEBSITE ▶ TALK TO US ▶ SEARCH

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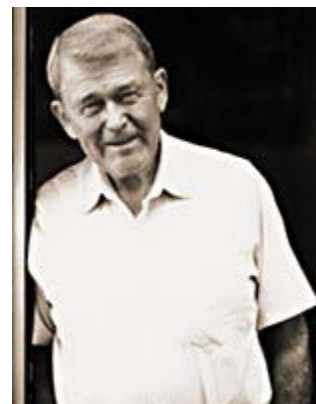
Father Figure

William R. Hewlett is best known for helping birth Silicon Valley, but the apple of his eye for most of his life was the fledgling university he nurtured and watched mature.

by **Larry Gordon**

Photographs courtesy Hewlett-Packard

HANGING PROMINENTLY in a quiet office at Hewlett-Packard headquarters on Page Mill Road is a 7-by-12-foot patchwork quilt. It colorfully depicts its owner's most cherished symbols and landmarks, each of the 15 squares a kind of embroidered historical vignette. There's Hoover Tower, Memorial Church, the Medical Center, the Terman Engineering Building. And there is a nondescript Addison Avenue garage in Palo Alto commonly known as the birthplace of Silicon Valley.



William Redington Hewlett owned the quilt, which was commissioned by his children as a gift in 1989. Now, months after Hewlett's death on January 12 at 87, it remains undisturbed in the office he occupied for many years, a reminder of his life's work and a love affair between a Farm kid and a university who grew up together.

There is no such visual record on Stanford's campus, but only because Hewlett wanted it that way. However, evidence of his presence is everywhere. His service and support, in combination with that of his friend and HP co-founder, David Packard (who died in 1996), is nearly unsurpassed in the history of the University. Only Leland and Jane Stanford themselves could claim to have figured more prominently in the University's success than these two engineers.

In the post-World War II era, Mr. H. and Mr. P. came to symbolize what Stanford-trained researchers could produce. They were as responsible as anyone for Stanford's emergence from regionalism and genteel respectability into a world-class university. "Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard contributed to Stanford's rise to prominence in a number of very important ways," says President John Hennessy. "First, they were leaders in developing the entrepreneurial style and in showing the value of university technology transfer. They became role models, and their success inspired many others at Stanford to try their hand at entrepreneurship. Beyond that, their company served as the primary 'seed corn' in creating Silicon Valley, and Stanford has benefited enormously from the vibrant scientific and technological community that has grown up around us."

Their most tangible support was financial. Altogether, Hewlett and Packard and their family foundations donated close to \$400 million to Stanford, according to John Ford, '71, vice president for development. Among their most notable contributions were \$77.4 million to build the Science and Engineering Quad and \$25 million to endow the Terman fellowships in those fields. Those gifts alone could have established Stanford as one of the world's great centers for the study and use of technology. Yet they fall far short of representing the full measure of the H and P imprint.

Bill Hewlett's relationship with Stanford went much deeper than pockets. He was in many ways like a father to the University, supporting it in good times and bad--sometimes indulgent, sometimes strict, always unconditionally loving. Not that he ever publicly depicted himself in an authoritarian role. By all accounts, he remained a down-to-earth and even shy man, whose contributions to the campus were frequently anonymous and who looked more like a suburban weekend fisherman than a titan of industry.

In fact, Hewlett and Stanford nurtured each other. Hewlett's affection for the University traces back to his radio engineering classes in a leaky attic lab during the Depression with Professor Frederick Terman. Hewlett's father, Albion Walter Hewlett, was a Medical School professor, but he died when Hewlett was 12. Terman helped fill that void a few years later with encouragement and intellectual stimulation. After Hewlett and classmate Packard earned their Stanford undergraduate degrees in 1934 and moved east, Terman lured them back with fellowships and, legend holds, loaned them part of the \$538 they used to start their firm. Terman even suggested the idea for their first commercial product, the audio oscillator that Walt Disney



GRIPPING STORY: Engineering professor Frederick Terman, right, inspired Hewlett's and Packard's lifelong involvement with

Studios bought to help produce the Fantasia soundtrack.

"Mr. Hewlett was very passionate and very emotional about Stanford," his former secretary, Mollie Yoshizumi, recalled after his death. "Mr. Packard and Mr. Hewlett had very strong feelings that it was because of Professor Terman and Stanford that they wound up with this very successful company."

Stanford. Packard, left, and Hewlett, center, honored their mentor when they funded construction of the Terman Engineering Building, dedicated in 1952.

The most astonishing aspect of the link was its longevity, says former Stanford President Gerhard Casper. "Bill Hewlett's relationship with Stanford lasted 85 years, almost the entire history of the institution," Casper said in a telephone interview from Berlin, where he is on a sabbatical fellowship. "His connection to Stanford turned out to be even longer than that of the other great early figure, Herbert Hoover, who was in the pioneer class [of 1895]."

Hewlett was 3 years old when his parents moved to Stanford from the University of Michigan. Throughout his early years in school, he struggled with dyslexia. His oldest son, Walter Hewlett, recalls family stories about his father crying during boyhood reading lessons. As a result, Bill Hewlett apparently forced himself to develop an unusually strong memory. Even at Stanford, he rarely took lecture notes but "listened very carefully and decided what to remember," according to his son.

Hewlett enrolled at Stanford in 1930 and became good friends with Packard. Their lives would be entwined from then on. They briefly separated after graduation--Packard headed for New York to work for General Electric, and Hewlett went to MIT, where he earned a master's in electrical engineering. Terman wooed them back in 1936. Two years later, while still working toward engineering degrees at Stanford, they rented the Palo Alto cottage that incubated their multibillion-dollar company--the spark for the technological revolution that spawned Silicon Valley.

Hewlett loved to build things, fix things, figure things out. Friends and family have scores of anecdotes, like the time he repaired the circuitry on his nephew's stereo by employing a metal rod heated over a stove. He taught his grandchildren how a compass works, why the rainbow looks that way, how Lake Tahoe got its shape. At a January 20 memorial service at Stanford, Walter Hewlett remembered his father's profound understanding of--and passion for--the laws of the physical world. "I can recall many a painful moment when he would try to explain circular functions to me," he said at the service. "I was in second grade."



SOUNDS GOOD: Packard, seated, and Helwett run a final test on an audio oscillator, their company's first commercial product, in 1939.

Herant Katchadourian, professor emeritus of human biology, says Hewlett once confided to him that, had he chosen differently, he might have become a physician like his father. "That made sense," Katchadourian says. "This man loved to tinker with machinery. He would have tinkered with the machinery of the human body and alleviated human suffering."

Katchadourian adds that while Hewlett might not have entertained such psychological speculation, the idea of becoming a doctor might have appealed as a way "to get close to the father he really didn't know."

In his adult life, Hewlett cultivated a broad-ranging intellectual curiosity. Corrine Nelson, the widow of former communication department chairman Lyle Nelson, recalls an evening in 1963 when historian Arnold Toynbee was visiting the campus. The Nelsons were hosting a dinner for Toynbee and a group of local high school students, including one of Hewlett's five children. Hewlett came by to pick up his son but soon joined a lively discussion of ancient history. "After the Hewletts left, Toynbee shook his head and said: 'What an amazing fellow. He has more knowledge of history than many historians,'" she says.

Casper speculates that Hewlett would have been a great faculty member, in the model of Fred Terman. The former president has special affection for a letter that Hewlett wrote in 1935 to Terman about the professor's new book. In the note, Hewlett said he found several mistakes in the text and offered some drawings and calculations as proof. In his reply, says Casper, Terman, touched, thanked Hewlett for catching the errors.

That kind of synergy, in which the teacher also learns from the student, symbolizes the ideal of university life, according to Casper. "It was the kind of letter every university professor would like to receive."

Former Stanford President Richard Lyman says Hewlett's intellect and curiosity made him "the ideal university trustee." Hewlett, who also served on the Stanford Hospital board, was a trustee from 1963 to 1974. It was a difficult era that tested the strength of his relationship with the University. He was angered and hurt by the



MAJOR LEAGUE: Hewlett, left, was an Army major on leave when he visited Packard at HP headquarters in 1945. Packard ran the business while Hewlett conducted research for the Signal Corps for three years during World War II.

protests and violence against the school and against the corporate technocracy he represented to some of the younger generation. Hewlett's house suffered minor damage in a firebombing attempt in 1971, and he received telephoned death threats. But acquaintances say that Packard, whose service as deputy defense secretary in the Nixon administration made him a special target for anti-war protesters, became much more alienated from the University, temporarily restricting his gifts to just athletics and the Hoover Institution.

"Packard pulled back some of his giving. But Bill never stopped, and I think Bill was instrumental in bringing Dave back into the fold," says Lyman, who was provost and later president during Hewlett's tenure as a trustee.

Walter Hewlett stresses that his father's devotion to Stanford was based not merely on sentiment but on a profound belief in the educational enterprise. "He was very interested in the things Stanford was doing and wanted to support them. I think the most important thing was that Stanford was making a worthwhile contribution to society."

"The counsel offered by Dave and Bill, as well as their philanthropy at Stanford, always focused on one goal: ensuring that this University will be the best it can be," says Hennessy.

In an address at a 1995 event honoring him and Packard, Hewlett expressed concern about the rising cost of higher education and emphasized the importance of Stanford sustaining its need-blind admissions policy. "The answer, of course, is more and more fellowships and scholarships," he said. David Glen, '64, a major gifts officer at Stanford, says "hundreds of students" have benefited from scholarships Hewlett helped fund, including some that carry other donors' names. Moreover, "there are about 50 faculty walking around on this campus because of Bill Hewlett's fellowships."

Hewlett usually gave HP stock and often offered it as a matching donation to encourage Stanford not to become addicted to just his and Packard's support. "He didn't want to be the only person giving a gift. He felt it was not right," says Walter Hewlett, who has two graduate engineering degrees and a 1980 doctorate in music from Stanford. "And he didn't want to be the sole determining factor in whether something succeeded or not."

Besides, Walter Hewlett adds, "I don't think he or Dave ever thought they were more or less important than any of their friends who also helped Stanford. Stanford is loved by many people, and each person does what he or she can."



PROUD MOMENT: Hewlett-Packard employees surprised the two founders with "service awards" at a luncheon in 1988 celebrating the 50th anniversary of the company. Hewlett once told a reporter that he was proudest of the management style--"the HP way" that he and Packard popularized--that gave employees broad autonomy to make decisions and solve problems.

Hewlett could and did turn the University down at times. "He was clearly somebody who was being asked for money a lot by lots of people. I was completely clear that if I asked him for support, he might say 'No,' or 'This is too much,'" Casper says. "I think he was concerned that Stanford not take him for granted. I certainly did not."

But, again and again, Hewlett stepped up when help was needed most. After the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake devastated the Quad, including Memorial Church, he wanted to ensure swift repair of the central symbol of the campus. He offered an anonymous \$3 million gift, nearly a third of the \$10 million needed to fix the church, on condition that work begin immediately, recalls religious studies professor Robert Gregg, who was then

the dean of the chapel. "I think he understood that the sooner the centerpiece monument was returned, the sooner people would have a sense that we were back in operation," says Gregg.

There was, of course, plenty of money to give away as Hewlett-Packard grew from a start-up that made "anything to bring in a nickel" to a multibillion-dollar producer of computer hardware and scientific equipment. Last year, Forbes magazine ranked Hewlett the 26th-wealthiest person in the nation, worth an estimated \$9 billion. The endowment of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation reportedly tripled to \$9 billion after his death. Hewlett also helped found the Public Policy Institute of California in 1990 with a \$70 million donation.

Oddly, though, in an age when corporate symbols appear on stadiums and performing arts venues in every major city, and university campuses bristle with named buildings, not one Stanford edifice bears the word Hewlett. (Packard's name went onto the electrical engineering center after his death.) Hewlett repeatedly declined opportunities to have his name attached to a Stanford building or project. Stanford may try again to find a way to memorialize him. "The University would be honored if the family would let it associate his name with some of the activities he supported over the years," John Ford notes.

"Bill and Dave would never want us to feel indebted to them, but it is almost impossible for us not to feel that way," says Hennessy.

Katchadourian says it was typical of Hewlett to shun recognition, and

he rejected most of the trappings of the wealthy. Yes, he had the ranches he shared with Packard, and very comfortable homes, but he owned no private jets, no giant yachts, and his wardrobe was distinctly unpatrician. People remember Hewlett driving around the Peninsula in a company Taurus station wagon.

"If you didn't know him, it could be difficult to separate the person from the purse," Katchadourian says. "But when you got to know him, the thing that was so impressive was how this man was so untouched by his fortune. He would have been the same person even if he did not have the fortune."



MODEL CITIZEN: Hewlett's support for nonprofit causes has inspired other Silicon Valley leaders to share their wealth.

Walter Hewlett agrees. "My dad didn't want to be distracted by the money he made. He was too interested in other things. He never forgot where he came from and who he was."

Hewlett's lack of pretense immediately struck Gerhard Casper when he left the University of Chicago to become Stanford's president in 1992. Moments after the press conference announcing his appointment, Casper was whisked off to meet Hewlett and Packard. "It was like going to meet some fabulous mythical beasts," Casper recalls. But the tension lifted as Hewlett walked in wearing shorts, as if he were at a friendly backyard barbecue.

Not long after that encounter, Hewlett and Casper were in a car together en route to a meeting in the East Bay. Hewlett offered the new president \$1 million in discretionary money "for me to do whatever I wanted to," says Casper, who spent most of it on his initiatives to strengthen undergraduate education. "One million dollars is a huge amount of money for a university president. You can achieve a lot with it."

Hewlett's philanthropy inspired other industry leaders to open their own wallets a little wider. When Silicon Valley entrepreneur William T. Coleman, '76 Comp. Sci., donated \$250 million to the University of Colorado recently--the largest gift in the history of higher education--he pointed to Hewlett and Packard as his models.

Toward the end of Hewlett's life, as his health failed, he remained as close to Stanford as he could, touring the campus in a wheelchair until eventually even those trips proved too taxing. Casper went to visit him at his Palo Alto home about two years ago. As they sat side by side, Casper recalls, this Silicon Valley patriarch, a student of history, a man who knew how things worked, realized that his own

story was about to end.

"He held my hand tightly for a long time. Then he suddenly turned to me and said: 'Gerhard, the curtain has fallen.'"

Casper, on the phone line from Germany, is briefly overcome. He pauses, gathers himself, then continues: "I was just in love with the man."

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