

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS  
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CABLE, CYANDRIC



*File of  
Edwin  
E. W. Rice Jr.*

*2879*

TO THE PRESS - For release Monday, December 14, 1931

EDISON MEDAL AWARDED TO  
EDWIN W. RICE, JR. ✓

The Edison Medal for 1931 has been awarded by the American Institute of Electrical Engineers to Dr. Edwin Wilbur Rice, Jr., "for his contributions to the development of electrical systems and apparatus and his encouragement of scientific research in industry."

The Edison Medal was founded by associates and friends of Thomas A. Edison, and is awarded annually for "meritorious achievement in electrical science, electrical engineering, or the electrical arts" by a committee consisting of twenty-four members of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers.

The following eminent engineers and scientists have been recipients of the medal: Elihu Thomson, Frank J. Sprague, George Westinghouse, William Stanley, Charles F. Brush, Alexander Graham Bell, Nikola Tesla, John J. Carty, Benjamin G. Lamme, W.L.R. Emmet, Michael I. Pupin, Cummings C. Chesney, Robert A. Millikan, John W. Lieb, John White Howell, Harris J. Ryan, William D. Coolidge, Frank B. Jewett, Charles F. Scott, and Frank Conrad.

Edwin W. Rice, Jr., is one of the pioneers of electrical development in the United States and has played a conspicuous part, in association with the late Charles A. Coffin, in the building of General Electric.

As a school-boy in Philadelphia he came in contact in 1876 with Professor Elihu Thomson, then a young teacher in the Boys' Central High School. His natural fondness for mechanics and later for electricity was quickly developed by this association, and when in 1880 the professor gave up teaching to go into electrical manufacturing as scientist and inventor, young Rice gladly accepted an opportunity to become his assistant.

He went with Thomson to New Britain, Conn., in the old American Electric Company, and in 1883 went with the professor to Lynn, Mass., upon the organization of the Thomson-Houston Electric Company. At the age of twenty-two he was made plant superintendent and had this full responsibility until the consolidation of the Thomson-Houston Electric Company and the Edison General Electric

Company in 1892, under the name of General Electric Co.

In the new company Mr. Rice was first made technical director, then Vice-President in charge of manufacturing and engineering. He eventually became senior Vice-President, and in 1913, he succeeded Mr. Coffin as President of the company. In 1922, after nine years' service in that office, he was succeeded by Gerard Swope. Dr. Rice at that time was made honorary chairman of the Board, which position he still holds.

He has contributed much, through organization methods, improved factory routine, technical development, and engineering and scientific inventions, to the pre-eminence attained by General Electric.

His degrees are: Honorary A.M., Harvard (1903); Sc.D., Union University (1906); Doctor of Engineering, Rensselaer Polytechnic (1917); Sc.D., University of Pennsylvania (1924). He is a past president and a Fellow of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, and a Chevalier Legion d'Honneur of France. In 1917 he was decorated by the emperor of Japan with the Third Order of the Rising Sun with Cordon.

He invented the present fundamental form of high-voltage oil switch and the cellular system of separating buses and circuits; as well as the application of synchronous converters to the building of unified alternating and direct-current distribution systems. He was responsible for the adoption by General Electric of the Curtis steam turbine, and for the establishment of the General Electric research laboratory. He has endorsed and promoted many modern forms of industrial organization and of methods of advancing employees' welfare.

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December 11, 1931