

Professor more than engineer

Academic insisted students had broad education

EMERITUS Professor Archibald Gordon Bogle, founding head of the University of Auckland department of electrical engineering. Died aged 90.

PROFESSOR Bogle, renowned for both his imposing intellect and his physical stature, completed his Bachelor of Electrical Engineering in 1935 and a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering the following year.

He won a Rhodes Scholarship in 1937 and was accepted at Oriel College, Oxford. At Oxford, he worked towards a DPhil until the outbreak of World War II when he joined the Admiralty team engaged in the development of radar systems. He completed his doctorate at the Admiralty.

Born in Wanganui in 1914 and educated at Wanganui Collegiate and later Victoria and Canterbury Universities, Professor Bogle grew up during the Depression. His father, Archie, was a prominent surveyor and his mother, Bertha Reeve, a teacher, was one of the very few women of her era to earn an MA in mathematics. His mother was a strong influence and is credited with passing on to him a life-long love for mathematics, and perhaps an unorthodox world view.

Professor Bogle was a practical man, turning his hand to many things — even sewing his wife's evening gowns.

After the war, Professor Bogle returned to New Zealand with his English wife, Helen, and their two children, taking up a position as chief electrical engineer at the Dominion Physical Laboratories (pre-DSIR), shortly afterwards becoming the director.

In 1953, he accepted an invitation to become the first professor and head of department of electrical engineering and later dean at Auckland University's school of engineering, then at Ardmore. He joined

Professors Alan Titchener and Neil Mowbray, to become one of the three founders of the school, now the largest in the country.

The school moved into Auckland in 1969.

Professor Bogle was distinguished in his field but was much more than an electrical engineer.

He was an educated man in the fullest sense — keenly interested in a wide range of matters, literate and widely-read and possessed of a mind well-furnished until very late in life with a fund of apposite verses and quotations ranging from the classical to the light-hearted.

These faculties were coupled with a wonderful sense of humour and a ready wit and, with his vivacious wife, Helen, as hostess, the Bogle home became a lively hub for parties, attracting a stimulating mixture of people from academia, the arts and industry.

While his analytical mind proved intimidating to some of his students and he never accepted second best, former students recall him as a fine teacher who was patient with those struggling to master a topic.

He was a strong advocate of a broad education for engineering students and insistent that they should be capable of expressing themselves accurately. To this end, he introduced a general studies programme of humanities subjects into the engineering curriculum, which continued for some 15 years.

Professor Bogle is survived by his daughter, his five sons and nine grandchildren.

Professor Peter Brothers

Professor Brothers is dean of the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Auckland.



Archibald Bogle