

A Brief Biography of Robert C. Richardson

Bob Richardson was born on June 26, 1937 in Washington, DC. He grew up in the Washington suburb of Arlington, Va. He attended the Arlington County public schools and graduated from Washington-Lee High School in 1954. He was very active in the Boy Scouts. He became an Eagle Scout and especially enjoyed the outdoor activities of scouting - hiking, camping, and even bird watching.

He attended Virginia Polytechnic Institute between 1954 and 1960 where he obtained both B.S. and M.S. degrees in physics. After a brief time in the United States Army he returned to graduate school in physics at Duke University. His thesis work involved NMR studies of solid ^3He . He obtained his Ph. D. degree from Duke in 1966. His thesis advisor was Professor Horst Meyer.

In the Fall of 1966 he began work at Cornell University in the laboratory of David Lee. Their research goal was to observe the nuclear magnetic phase transition in solid ^3He that could be predicted from Richardson's thesis work with Horst Meyer at Duke. In collaboration with Douglas Osheroff, a student who joined the group in 1967, they worked on cooling techniques and NMR instrumentation for studying low temperature helium liquids and solids. In the Fall of 1971, they made the accidental discovery that liquid ^3He undergoes a pairing transition similar to that of superconductors. The three were awarded the Nobel Prize for that work in 1996.

Bob has been on the Cornell faculty since 1967. He is currently the F. R. Newman Professor of Physics and the Vice Provost for Research. In the more than 35 years at Cornell he has led an active research program in studies of matter at very low temperatures. In that time 20 students have earned Ph. D. degrees while working with him. He has published more than 95 scientific articles in major research journals. He has been active in teaching introductory physics throughout his time at Cornell. He prepared a series of video taped lectures for Physics 101 and 102, the course for biology students, in 1985.

Bob's wife, Betty Richardson, is a Senior lecturer in physics at Cornell. For the past seven years the Richardsons have worked with Alan Giambattista, also of Cornell, on the production of an introductory college physics text book. The book, *College Physics*, is an algebra based text which was published by McGraw-Hill in February 2003.

