lurren three. In 1985 he was the
ter to every graduate student from
ous about fundamental science principles.
le himself in his office and often chal-
gleam in his eye when surrounded by
was happiest when working with stu-
not traveling. Although he was known
campus office from 8am to 5pm if he was
keeping AAPT to meet its payroll. Those
actions characterized a man who went
beyond professing to care and actually
put his words into action.
len was an exceptional student of
physics, a master teacher, and a gentle-
man. As his colleagues and friends, we
miss his good advice, his presence at
meetings, the many conversations in
which he expressed his concern for us,
and, especially, his witty remarks. Most
of all, we remember his subtle wit.

Lillian C. McDermott
University of Washington
Seattle
James H. Stith
Mitchellville, Maryland

William Delany Walker

William Delany Walker, James B. Duke
Professor of Physics emeritus at Duke
University, died of cancer in Durham,
North Carolina, on 8 April 2010.

Bill was born on 23 November 1923,
raised in Dallas, Texas, and went to Rice
Institute (now Rice University) in
Houston, from which he obtained his
undergraduate degree in physics in
1944. After being commissioned as an
officer in the US Navy, he worked on
far-IR detection at the US Naval
Research Laboratory until the end of
World War II. He then went to graduate
school at Cornell University and stud-
ed with Richard Feynman, Hans Bethe,
and his thesis adviser Kenneth Greisen.
His thesis on cosmic-ray physics, enti-
tled “A Study of Penetrating Showers,”
earned him his doctorate in 1949.

After teaching briefly at Rice, at the
University of California, Berkeley, and
at the University of Rochester, Bill took
a faculty position with the physics de-
partment at the University of Wiscon-
sin. There he had a distinguished ca-
career, building up the high-energy
physics program based on the cutting-
edge technology of the time, bubble
chambers. He served as department

www.physicstoday.org August 2010 Physics Today 65
chairman for two years and, in recognition of his contributions to experimental high-energy physics, was awarded the Max Mason distinguished professorship.

In the early 1960s, Bill codiscovered the rho meson, one of only a few subatomic particles then known to exist. It was eventually realized that the rho meson was an excited state of the lowest-mass strongly interacting particle, the pion. The discovery, along with other observations of excited states of hadrons, led to the formulation of the SU(3) flavor symmetry of mesons and baryons. Bill was also project director for the construction of the 30-inch hydrogen bubble chamber that was used for many years of physics at Argonne National Laboratory and later for early experiments at the Fermilab Tevatron.

In 1971 Bill went to Duke University, where he again built up an experimental high-energy physics group and served two terms as chairman of the physics department. He continued making innovative contributions to elementary particle research through the use of hydrogen and heavy-liquid bubble chambers. Duke recognized his long and productive research career by awarding him a James B. Duke Chair.

Bill had many interests in addition to experimental high-energy physics, yet his life formed an integrated whole. In his mid-thirties he experienced a radical conversion to Christianity, in part as a result of his physics research. Being a true academic, he decided to take seminary courses—he later jokingly referred to that work as earning his “merit badge in theology”—and was ordained in the Episcopal Church. Over the years he served in the leadership of a number of evangelical congregations. Bill and his wife, Constance Kalbach Walker, a senior research scientist at Duke, were called on in both church and academic settings to explain the harmony that exists between the Biblical and scientific perspectives on creation and on the world around us. They eventually coauthored a booklet on the subject.

His technical knowledge, combined with a genuine concern for the welfare of society and the environment, led Bill to be a vocal advocate for the safe and responsible use of nuclear energy. He was also an outstanding athlete; he had been the top tennis player on his college varsity team and continued winning state and local tournaments until he was in his early eighties. He remained an avid player until a few months before his death.

Bill will be remembered not only for his numerous scientific achievements and strong faith but also as a man of gentle strength, deep wisdom, genuine concern for others, and amazing perseverance.

We thank Constance Kalbach Walker for her numerous contributions to this obituary.

Alfred T. Goshaw
Duke University
Durham, North Carolina

Albert Erwin
University of Wisconsin–Madison

William Delany Walker
DUKE UNIVERSITY PHYSICS DEPARTMENT