

## Short Biography of Ernest K. (Ernie) Smith

Ernie was born: May 21, 1922 in the Rockefeller Hospital in Peking, China, the son of Prof. Ernest K. Smith and Grace Goodrich Smith. He was raised on the campuses of Tsinghua and Yenching Universities, both about five miles outside the city walls of Beijing.

Ernie attended the Peking American School, and, upon graduation, was sent to the US in 1940 to attend Swarthmore College from which he graduated with a degree in physics in February 1944. He later received his MSc (1951) and Ph.D.(1956) from Cornell University in Electrical Engineering.

He married Mary Louise Standish in 1950 and they have three daughters, Priscilla Varland, Nancy Smith and Cynthia Jackson and now have seven grandchildren.

Drafted upon graduation he served from 1944-46 in the US Army Signal Corps' Ionosphere Utilization Unit, later renamed the Radio Propagation Unit. He joined the engineering department of the Mutual Broadcasting System (MBS) as an Assistant Radio Engineer in 1946 and left in 1949 as Chief Plans and Allocations Engineer.

He was Prof. Henry G. Booker's first thesis student at Cornell, and he was the second technical man from the Bureau of Standards to come to Boulder (in 1951). He spent the 50's in research and the sixties in management where he became successively a chief of CRPL's Ionosphere Research and Propagation Division, the Upper Atmosphere and Space Physics Division in NBS, the director of the Aeronomy Laboratory in ESSA (the precursor of NOAA), and first director of the Institute for Telecommunication Sciences, then also in ESSA. He took early retirement from the Federal Civil Service in 1976 and worked for the Caltech Jet Propulsion laboratory until reaching retirement age in 1987. From 1980-1987 he was JPL manager of the NASA Earth-Space propagation program, an off-Laboratory activity where he got to know the next two speakers, Bob Crane and Wolf Vogel. Since 1987 he has been attached to the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department at the University of Colorado (CU) as a Professor Adjunct. He has been the co-instructor with Dr. Kenneth Davies (1999), Dr. David C. Hogg (1989-1995) and Dr. Warren L. Flock (1987) of a graduate course "Earth-space Radiowave Propagation" at CU.

Ernie is a fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) and of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and has been active in the International Scientific Radio Union (URSI), and the International Radio Consultative Committee of the ITU, from which he received the Diplome d'Honneur, and the CU chapter of Sigma Xi. He has 75 publications in the fields of ionospheric physics (particularly sporadic E) and radio wave propagation, including three books.

Ernie joined the First Congregational Church in Boulder in 1957 and has served as Moderator 1995-97. He served as convenor in 1997 of the Boulder Chapter of the United Nations Association and in 1990 of Gatekeepers-to-the-Future. He and Dean Wm. E. Briggs ran the Boulder Gatekeepers Elderhostel up at the Saint Malo Retreat Center from 1994-96.

Ernie has returned to China seven times since 1986, twice as a guest of the Chinese Government, and will be returning in October for an Elderhostel. In February 1999 he went on a three week Elderhostel to India.