

Eric Lidow: The pioneer in power semiconductors

Published on Electronic Component News (<http://www.ecnmag.com>)

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Born: December 22, 1912

Die: January 18, 2013

Eric Lidow was born in Vilnius, Lithuania over one hundred years ago. He was educated as an electrical engineer in Berlin during the rise of the Third Reich. As a founding member of the Berlin Zionist Society, Eric saved the lives of many Jews by helping them to leave Germany before the war. Being in Berlin at that time gave him the clear view that Europe was rapidly approaching war and, after completing his Masters Degree from the Technical University of Berlin, he left for the United States. Eric arrived in New York in October 1937 with \$14 in his pocket and a Leica camera.



In 1939 he moved to Los Angeles and started his first semiconductor company, Selenium Corporation of America using borrowed equipment and working in the back of a photo studio. His first son, Alan, was born in 1942.

Selenium Corporation of America supported the war effort with advanced power electronics and was sold to Sperry Corporation in 1946. Through the Red Cross in 1946 Eric was able to locate his parents, both Holocaust survivors, and bring them to the United States. With his father, Leon, Eric started his second power

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electronics company, International Rectifier, where he was CEO until 1995 and Chairman of the Board until 2008.

Under Eric's leadership International Rectifier pioneered many of the fundamental advances in power electronics. Eric Lidow also pioneered many of today's global business models. Eric Lidow set up semiconductor joint ventures throughout Europe and Japan in the 1950's, often as the first semiconductor company in the country. He went into India in the 1960's, and China in the early 1980's. Operations in all these areas and more exist to this day with thousands of people spread throughout the world.

In 1952 Eric married the love of his life, Elizabeth. Elizabeth had a daughter, Melodie, from her prior marriage, whom Eric loved as his own. Together they had two sons, Derek and Alexander.

Eric was a proud supporter of Israel, The Technion, The City of Hope, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and countless philanthropic organizations and individuals through the years.

Eric believed that a person's worth is measured based on their contribution to society. He lived his life every day true to that belief. He is survived by his four children, three daughters-in-law, and nine grandchildren.

All who knew him were better for it.

Source URL (retrieved on 01/31/2015 - 11:59pm):

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