

William T Kirk 1927–2003

In 1956 Edward L Ginzton, the then director of the Microwave Laboratory at Stanford University, advertised for an assistant. William "Bill" Kirk, a history graduate of Cornell in 1952, who was working in industry after graduation, responded to the ad and moved to Stanford. He remained there until his death, from cancer, on 14 February 2003.

Kirk became much more than an administrator and assistant to SLAC's directors. He was a problem solver, a mediator, a guardian of the Queen's English, and an invaluable bridge between all members of the SLAC community – technical workers, administrators and scientists. He later ably directed all of SLAC's information activities.

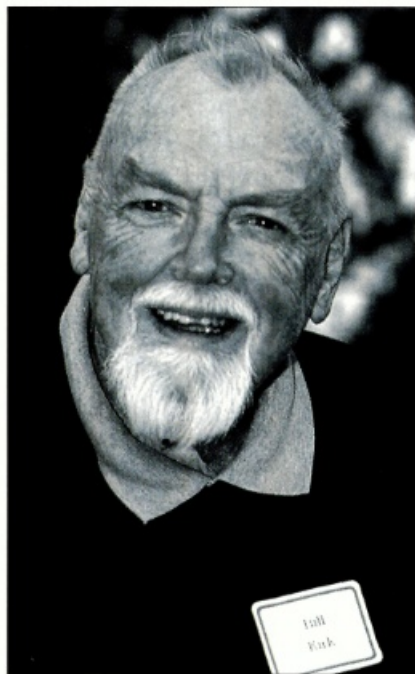
Kirk is probably most widely remembered for creating SLAC's particle-physics magazine *Beam Line* in 1974. Until 1988 he was the *Beam Line*, performing all the work from writing to composition, layout and typesetting. After 1988 he remained as co-editor until his retirement in 1993, when he continued as an informal advisor to the editor.

While Kirk was a history major and novelist, he understood high-energy physics and high-energy physicists. His writings on high-energy

physics, such as the article "High Energy Physics – An Introduction" that among other topics compared the technology and purpose of storage rings and fixed-target machines, have become classics in popular science writing. Kirk also wrote lucid articles on the operation of PEP, the discovery of the J/Psi particles and many others. He became very much in demand as an editor of the many international conference proceedings of meetings in high-energy physics, a task he always undertook with great skill and a drive for perfection.

Bill was a very humble person, notwithstanding his major contributions to high-energy physics. Most of the verbiage in the 1957 proposal to government agencies, which led to the creation of SLAC, largely originated from Kirk's pen, yet his name does not appear among the profuse acknowledgments in the document.

Throughout his career, Kirk divided his interests in high-energy physics and writing with a dedication to athletics. He was a member of several of Cornell University's successful football teams, an avid golf player, and the instigator of and slugger in the annual



baseball game between theorists and experimentalists at SLAC. Kirk's contributions to SLAC and to high-energy physics will be long remembered. He was a great man, always available, always constructive and always helpful. We will miss him.
Pief Panofsky, SLAC.