
IN MEMORIUM



Leslie (Les) J. Palkuti passed away on October 19, 2017, following a courageous battle with cancer. Up to the end, Les was active in the radiation-hardened electronics research community and served GOMACTech as an active member of both the Technical and the Steering Committees. Les was the driving force behind championing student involvement in the conference, instituting the student paper award and serving as the conference awards chairman for many years. In his professional career, Les earned the respect of the defense microelectronics and defense program management communities for his tireless efforts on their behalf. Les was a unique person with strong technical skills and real command of the field. He also had a great sense of humor.

Les was born in Szeged, Hungary, May 7, 1939, and immigrated to the United States with his family in 1951, later becoming a citizen. He graduated from The Ohio State University in 1966 with Bachelor's and Master's degrees, then completed his Ph.D. in 1971, all in electrical engineering. He was a lifelong member of the Ohio State Alumni Association and won the Best Buckeye Award for producing an excellent Alumni Club newsletter for many years. Les was an avid fan of Ohio State football, following the team to many of its games and championships over the years. Les also loved to windsurf, ski, and play tennis. Les was a veteran, having served in the United States Army. He was married to Harlene (Stapf) for 53 years.

Les began his engineering career with Battelle Memorial Institute in Columbus, Ohio, then worked at ARACOR Corporation in Sunnyvale, California, where he developed several patented pieces of equipment. From there, he went to the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C., and then moved to the Department of Defense and the (now) Defense Threat Reduction Agency where he was instrumental in the efforts to develop radiation-hardened circuits and advanced foundational technologies. Les was involved in developing the Science and Technology Roadmap for radiation-hardened circuits — essentially establishing the DoD strategy in this area. Les championed basic research as a core capability and became the first director of the Agency's new Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction Basic Research Initiative, where he then established a legacy of successful university research projects addressing specific long-term concerns in national security. That program has grown to encompass over 70 university grants and 10 laboratory research projects, and it is providing research results that will pave new directions for solving difficult challenges and help lead to a safer world for all. In 2009, Les retired from-full time work at DTRA, but he quickly returned to work there on a part-time basis until this past year when his battle with cancer commenced.

Les Palkuti was passionate in all of his pursuits. He was a visionary and a true leader, and he is missed.