

Averill John Wiley

June 10, 1911 to November 2, 2002

Averill Wiley was born in Pullman, Washington and received Bachelors and Masters of Science degrees from Washington State University. He subsequently did graduate work at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Averill was an early environmental scientist who specialized in the development of alternative uses of the spent products of the pulp and paper industry. Following a short stint as a bacteriologist for the city of Spokane, Washington, he was hired as the Technical Director of a group of Wisconsin sulphite paper mills. His job was to operate and manage a small pilot plant in Appleton. Eventually this pulp manufacturers group grew to include 38 U.S. and 3 Canadian pulp mills, and the pilot plant had grown to a 10,000 square foot research laboratory that also had a 10,000 item library. The staff grew to include 56 chemists, technicians and administrators. The Pulp Manufacturers Research League eventually merged with the Institute of Paper Chemistry.

Many productive and environmentally significant uses of sulphite pulp wastes were developed under the direction of Averill. He was one of the first to make use of reverse osmosis technology for cleaning up effluents from sulphite mills. He later conceptualized and combined reverse osmosis technology with a freeze concentration technology step that reduced energy costs for the overall process.

Averill was the author or co-author of 65 technical papers and a number of patents. He was a member of the American Chemical Society, Technical Association of the Pulp and Paper Industry and the Alexander Graham Bell Society. He received the Nash Award for Conservation for his "Outstanding contributions in reducing sulphite stream pollution." Averill accomplished all of this even though he had lost his hearing at the age of 15 as a result of meningitis.

Averill and his wife Maud had two sons, Averill J. Jr. and William T. Averill died in Appleton at the age of 91.