

Kent K. Curtis

NSF director who got the foundation going in the field of computer science, who got researchers going and founded (and expanded) many university computing centers through innovative funding opportunities.

Curtis studied mathematics, physics, and music at Yale, Dartmouth, and Berkeley. He did scientific programming for the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory of the University of California, where he was head of the Division of Mathematics and Computing from 1957 until 1967. He joined the National Science Foundation in 1967 and became head of the Computer Research Section of the Division of Mathematical and Computer Sciences at a time when the foundation was to be very influential in the development of university and college computing centers. He took leaves at the Atomic Energy Commission and the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences at New York University, and served as a consultant to the Department of Energy, other federal agencies, and the Swedish Technical Development Union. He was one of the founders and first president of VIM, the user's group for CDC6600 computers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Significant Publications

Curtis, Kent K, et al., 'John R. Pasta, 1918-1981: An Unusual Path Toward Computer Science,' *Ann. Hist. Comp.*, Vol. 5, No. 3, July 1983.

UPDATES

The New York Times published the following obituary on December 20, 1987:

Kent K. Curtis, chief scientist of the National Science Foundation, died Thursday of cancer at Sibley Memorial Hospital in Washington, D.C. He was 60 years old and lived in Washington.

Born in Charles City, Iowa, he joined the foundation in 1967.

He is survived by his wife, Herta Kley Curtis of Washington; four daughters, Sandra of Berkeley, Calif., Greta of San Rafael, Calif., Celia and Katherine, both of Washington; a son, Christian of Berkeley; two brothers, James of Missoula, Mont., and Mark of Bethesda, Md., and a sister, Cora Hayes of Des Moines.

(MRW, 2012)