

# John C. McPherson

*Born April 5, 1911; IBM vice president who was very influential in the development of software systems for the 700 series machines.*



*Education:* BS, electrical engineering, Princeton University, 1929.

*Professional Experience:* IBM Corp.: engineer, 1930-1943; director of engineering, 1943-1946, IBM vice president, 1948, first director, Systems Research Institute, 1960-1965; retired, 1971.

Graduating from Princeton University in 1929 with an electrical engineering degree, McPherson joined IBM in 1930 and began his lifelong interest in novel applications of punched-card machines and computers. He was a pioneer in the use of electromechanical machines for scientific computing. During World War II he was instrumental in the establishment of a punched-card computing facility at the Ballistic Research Laboratory at Aberdeen Proving Ground. As director of engineering at IBM from 1943 to 1946, he participated in the early planning of the SSEC. He was elected an IBM vice president in 1948. He was the first director of IBM's graduate-level Systems Research Institute, from 1960 to 1965. He retired in 1971.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Biographical

Hurd, Cuthbert, "Early IBM Computers: Edited Testimony," *Ann. Hist. Comp.*, Vol. 3. No. 1, 1981, pp. 163-182.

McPherson, John C., "Early Computers and Computing Institutions," *Ann. Hist. Comp.*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Jan. 1984, pp. 15-16.

### Significant Publications

McPherson, John C., et al., "A Large-Scale, General-Purpose Electronic Digital Calculator-the SSEC," originally unpublished 1948; printed *Ann. Hist. Comp.*, Vol. 4. No. 4, Oct. 1984, pp. 313-326.

## UPDATES

John McPherson died in 1999 (MRW, 2012)