

BOWDEN, R. Herbert "Herb"

August 8, 1925
Columbus, Kansas
October 25, 2007
Sioux Falls

R. Herbert (Herb) Bowden



R. Herbert (Herb) Bowden died Thursday October 25, 2007 at Sanford Foundation Hospice Cottage. Born August 8, 1925, in Columbus, Kansas, he reached the age of 82 years, 2 months and 17 days. His father was killed in a car-train wreck on Christmas day in 1928. His mother remarried and the family moved to South Dakota. He attended grade school in Viborg, South Dakota, high school in Hurley, South Dakota, and had six months of electronic training in the U.S. Navy, where he was an aviation radio-man, gunner, and radarman. In

1945 he flew in SB2C Helldiver dive bombers off the Franklin D. Roosevelt, the first "super" aircraft carrier.

Following his discharge from the Navy at the end of World War II, Herb attended the American Television Institute in Chicago and graduated in 1948 with a B.S. degree in electrical engineering. On March 18, 1950 Herb was united in marriage to Esther Anderson of Jasper Minnesota. Herb went to work for the Admiral Corporation as a technical writer. After Herb unexpectedly substituted for Admiral's Chief Engineer in a complex technical address to several hundred engineers in downtown Chicago, he was offered the Chief Television Application Engineering position, which he held for the next four years as he was instrumental in the roll out of color television broadcasting.

The Application Engineering job brought Herb into contact with many technicians who were unable to repair "tough dog" TV receivers and appealed to Herb for help. Herb struggled through many of these repairs because very few practical repair instruments were on the market. This motivated him into building his own instruments that would simplify many measurements. A year later, he founded Sencore. The company grew rapidly, and Herb built a new factory in Addison, Illinois, but he still longed to come home to South Dakota. He moved Sencore and the family to Sioux Falls in 1970.

Herb attempted to retire in 1991, but instead started a new career when he visited friends in Viborg who were very anxious to develop industry there. With energy to spare, Herb founded Bapco in Viborg to design, produce, and market test equipment for medical manufacturers and hospitals. He built a 20,000-square-foot building east of town, which established their industrial park. Herb managed Bapco for four years until it became profitable and then turned the company over to Sencore.

Herb always had a sense of serving the electronics industry. He became the president of the Electronic Industry Association of Chicago, chairman of the South Dakota State Chamber, and was president of an executive study group of Sioux Falls for ten years, which included several of his long time close business friends. Herb has also been active in politics where he served as the sole small business advisor to Senator Larry Pressler, business advisor to Senator Tom Daschle, and a member of John Thune's Roundtable. Herb was the NASA convention chairman in 1992, Family Business Person of the Year in 1985, Exporter of

Viborg Enterprise
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