

Battelle: On the Forefront of Technology

Institutions such as Battelle allow Columbus, Ohio to label itself a center of international research. Battelle Memorial Institute was the dream of Gordon Battelle, who like his father, was a business man in the steel making industry. Though not a scientist, he developed an interest in metallurgical research while living in Joplin, Missouri.

Gordon inherited the family business and returned to Columbus in 1918. Gordon's vision was for a non-profit institute devoted to scientific research that would benefit industry as well as mankind. Unfortunately, he died five years later before his institution was fully realized. He stipulated in his will that a percentage of the profits should go to charity.

His mother Annie Norton Battelle, the first woman member of the National Republican Committee, carried out Gordon's dream. She died in 1925, but not before naming a board of trustees. With her bequest, the total endowment for the institute came to \$3.5 million. The board included Battelle's friend, President Warren G. Harding, who also died in 1923 before he could officially serve on the board.

A 10-acre site was selected between King and Fifth Avenues, south of Ohio State University. Initially two buildings were built in 1929 – an administrative office and a laboratory. Since then Battelle has grown and expanded to include research facilities across the U.S. and in Europe.

Battelle is well known for its work on the Manhattan Project during WWII and developing the xerography or Xerox machine.

Sources:

Samuelson, Robert. *Architecture: Columbus*. Columbus, OH: Foundation of the Columbus Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, 1976.

Thomas, B. D. *The Legacy of Science: The Story of Battelle Memorial Institute*. New York, NY, Newcomen Society in North America, 1963.