

A Tribute to Engineering Innovation

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“Engineers build for the future, not merely for the needs of men, but for their dreams as well. Thus, inherently the engineer’s work is a fearless optimism that life will go forward, and that the future is worth working for.”

Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1951

Willis Whitfield

Sandia National Laboratories Innovator from 1954 to 1984

In 1959, Willis Whitfield developed a methodology that used unidirectional filtered air to dramatically reduce particle contamination in laboratory environments. His laminar air-flow design, patented in 1962, created the “clean room” environment found in laboratories, medical facilities, space industry, and micro/nanotechnology research and manufacturing throughout the world. The economic and scientific impact of Willis Whitfield’s innovation in contamination control is incalculable.