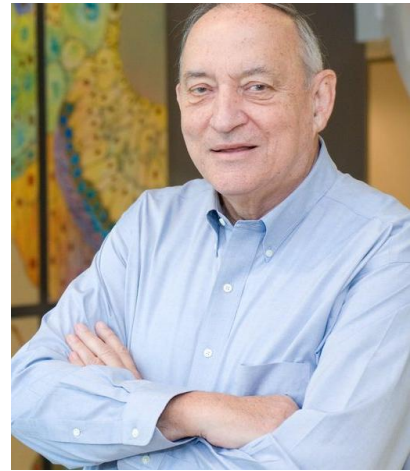


Robert Nerem

Robert “Bob” Nerem, Professor Emeritus and founding director of the Petit Institute for Bioengineering and Bioscience at Georgia Tech, died March 6 at Emory Hospital after a long illness. He was 82. He was born to Norwegian parents in Evanston, Ill, in 1937.

Bob held a BS from the University of Oklahoma and MS and PhD degrees in Mechanical Engineering from The Ohio State University. He began his research career in aerospace engineering, conducting studies on heat transfer in high-temperature shock-heated gases. He came to Tech in 1987 as a Professor and Parker H. Petit Distinguished Chair for Engineering in Medicine. Bob also held a joint appointment in the Georgia Tech/Emory Biomedical Engineering Department and the School of Chemical Engineering and was the Director of the Georgia Tech/Emory Center for the Engineering of Living Tissues. Prior, he was a Professor and Chairman in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Houston.



Bob did pioneering research in the field of cellular and tissue bioengineering and regenerative medicine as applied to the vascular system. His research projects included the development of a blood vessel substitute for use in bypass surgery, the investigation of hemodynamics as a regulator of vascular biology, and the mathematical modeling of the dynamic response of mammalian cells.

Starting with his graduate studies and throughout his 33 years at Georgia Tech, he crafted Bob Nerem’s 20 Rules of Life, a list of life lessons learned he freely shared with family members and students he advised. After Bob died, Marilyn, his wife of 41 years, found a new Rule of Life, scribbled in pen on a scrap of paper in his coat pocket. Rule No. 21: “Whatever you do, do something of service for someone else – then you’ll know it mattered that you were alive.” Bob invested in people, instilling the confidence to achieve their goals. In 2013, he started Project ENGAGES (Engaging New Generations at Georgia Tech through Engineering and Science) to provide science and engineering opportunities and mentors for teens from minority populations. “He always believed in the incredible potential every single person has to promote good in the world” said his daughter.

In addition to his wife Marilyn, son Steve of Boulder CO, and daughter Nancy Nerem Black of Charlottesville VA, Bob is survived by his former wife Jill Thomson Payne of Charlottesville, Va., step-daughters (whom he called bonus daughters) Christy Maser of Dublin, Ohio, and Carol Maser Wilcox of Hilliard, Ohio, and seven grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to Project ENGAGES, Georgia Tech Foundation, 760 Spring Street NW, Suite 400, Atlanta, GA, 30368. A celebration of life will be held later at Park Springs Retirement Community in Stone Mountain.

Drawn from an [obituary published in The AJC.com](#) on Mar 16, 2020 and from Institute records.