

From: Plese, Marge
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Subject: The following GA announcement was posted on our General Atomics internal web site today

Fusion Pioneer Tihiro Ohkawa Dies

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Tihiro Ohkawa, a pioneer of the U.S. and world fusion energy research effort, died September 27 at age 86 in La Jolla, CA. He was a long-time leader of the controlled fusion program at General Atomics.

Ohkawa received his Ph.D. in physics from the University of Tokyo. In 1960, he joined General Atomics, then a division of General Dynamics that had begun a private magnetic fusion research program; the initial program was jointly funded by General Dynamics and the Texas Atomic Energy Research Foundation. Many top fusion research scientists joined that program, including Marshall Rosenbluth and Donald Kerst. In 1961, Ohkawa and Kerst published a landmark paper, "Multiple Magnetic Field Configurations for Stable Plasma Confinement."

In 1969, Ohkawa proposed building a kidney-shaped plasma tokamak. Until that point, tokamak plasmas were circular in cross section. Ohkawa christened his concept "Doublet," for double tokamak, and built a small device at GA. Ohkawa then proposed building a major new tokamak device called Doublet III and funded by the U.S. Department of Energy. Under Ohkawa's leadership, the GA group became recognized a world leader in magnetic fusion research. Doublet III has since been upgraded into what is now DIII-D National Fusion Facility, the largest magnetic fusion program in the nation that continues to produce outstanding scientific results.

Ohkawa later became a Vice Chairman of General Atomics, as well as Director of GA's Institute for the Development and Application of Advanced Technology. He was recipient of the American Physical Society's James Clerk Maxwell Prize for Plasma Physics. He retired from GA in 1994.

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