

HAROLD CLAYTON UREY

1893 – 1981

Dr. Urey received a Nobel Prize in 1934 – the only Montanan to be so honored – for isolating deuterium, or heavy hydrogen, which was essential for the development of atomic energy.

He lamented that his discovery led to the hydrogen bomb but said it may make possible the fuel of the future, some day furnishing power for up to five billion years.

Urey also is recognized as the founder of U.S. cosmochemistry, the study of the chemical composition of the universe.

After his graduation from the University of Montana in 1917, Urey spent two years as a research chemist in Philadelphia before returning to the Missoula school as a chemistry instructor. He also taught high school at Big Timber in 1923. Urey received his doctorate from the University of California of Berkeley.

Since then, Urey has been awarded at least 25 honorary degrees from universities throughout the world.

In his later active years, the pioneer American nuclear chemist studied chemical problems of the origins of the earth, of meteorites, the moon and solar system, as well as the origin of life.

A professor emeritus at UC San Diego, he retired in California.