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General Atomics Establishes Memorial Website for Fusion Pioneer Tihiro Ohkawa

Web site reviews Ohkawa's remarkable life and contributions to fusion energy science

San Diego, June 26, 2018 – During his six-decade career researching plasma physics, Dr. Tihiro Ohkawa helped lay the groundwork for much of modern fusion energy science. Ohkawa, who passed away in 2014, spent 34 years at General Atomics (GA), where he was a long-time leader of the company's controlled fusion program.

Now, in cooperation with the Ohkawa family and Ohkawa's former colleague Dr. Teruo Tamano, GA has established a memorial web site – www.fusion-holy-grail.net – honoring his many contributions to fusion science. The URL reflects Ohkawa's lifelong quest for fusion energy, a goal he often referred to as the "Holy Grail." Illustrated with family photos and GA archival images, and enriched by numerous anecdotes from his many friends and colleagues, the site provides an in-depth look at his remarkable life.

A native of Japan, 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. 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 as a world leader in magnetic fusion research. Doublet III has since been upgraded into what is now the DIII-D National Fusion Facility, the largest magnetic fusion program in the nation, which 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 a recipient of the American Physical Society's James Clerk Maxwell Prize for Plasma Physics. He retired from GA in 1994.

***About General Atomics:** General Atomics pioneers advanced technologies with world-changing potential. GA has been at the cutting edge of energy innovation since the dawn of the atomic age – for more than 60 years. With scientists and engineers continually advancing the frontier of scientific discovery, GA is serving our growing planet's needs through safe, sustainable, and economical solutions across a comprehensive array of key energy technologies.*

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