

THE ELMER A. SPERRY AWARD – 2002

“FOR ADVANCING THE ART OF TRANSPORTATION”

RAYMOND PEARLSON

Raymond Pearlson is a native of New York City. During World War II he spent three years in the U.S. Navy. After separation from the Navy, he entered the University of Michigan, from which he graduated in 1949 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in naval architecture and marine engineering.

In 1949 he began his professional career with Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry-Dock Company. He spent the next five years working in various yard departments gaining practical shipbuilding knowledge. In 1953 Mr. Pearlson moved to Miami, Florida, and became chief engineer for a small shipyard. One of his assignments was to design and supervise the construction of a 300 ton lifting capacity ship-lift for the shipyard using the technology that was known at that time. His experience building this facility gave Mr. Pearlson the opportunity to develop a unique concept, which overcame the inherent limitations of lifting capacity and size. In 1957 Mr. Pearlson built the first Syncrolift with a lifting capacity of 100 tons. This lift is still operating today.

Mr. Pearlson formed his own company in 1959 to further the development of his invention. For the next 20 years he traveled to every corner of the world to introduce the Syncrolift to the marine industry. There are now more than 220 Syncrolifts in 66 countries of the world lifting and launching ships of more than 25,000 tons displacement.

Mr. Pearlson is a member of the American Committee of Lloyds Register of Shipping and has been a member of The Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers since 1957. In 1988 the Society honored him with the William M. Kennedy Award for “outstanding service and contribution in the development of systems and planning applying to shipbuilding and ship repair.” Mr. Pearlson was the recipient of the first annual Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering Alumni Society Merit Award of the University of Michigan.

Captain Perry W. Nelson, USN (Ret.), past president of the Society, presented Mr. Pearlson with The Elmer A. Sperry Award – 2002, at the Society’s International Luncheon on Saturday, October 18, 2004, during the 2003 World Maritime Technology Conference.