

Biographical Sketch  
DR. JAMES RHYNE KILLIAN, JR.  
President  
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Dr. James R. Killian, Jr., was inaugurated as the 10th president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in April, 1949, at the age of 45. His administration has been marked by an increased emphasis on general education and the humanities in the education of scientists and engineers, by the development of M.I. T. as a residential college, and by the Institute's steady evolution into a "university polarized around science."

Following his graduation from M.I. T. in 1926 with the degree of bachelor of science in business and engineering administration, Dr. Killian started his career as assistant managing editor of The Technology Review and served as its editor from 1930-39. His association with the Institute's administration began in 1939, when he was appointed executive assistant to the president.

During World War II, when M.I.T. mobilized its scientific facilities for service to the nation, he shared with the late Dr. Karl T. Compton, then president of the Institute, the administration of the Institute when it had responsibility for a vast and complex program of research and training that reached to every active front.

This period was also one of professional advancement for Dr. Killian himself. In July, 1943, he was appointed executive vice president of M.I. T., and his election as vice president came in December, 1945. Then, following the 1949 Mid-Century Convocation at which Winston Churchill spoke, he became the first M.I. T. alumnus to serve as its president.

Under Dr. Killian's leadership M.I. T. has been active in increasing its financial resources, not only to meet current needs but also, through long-range

(more)



plans, to provide for continual advancement in education and research. In the decade between 1946 and 1956, the Institute increased its capital resources of endowment and plant by more than forty-seven million dollars. During this period the funds received and pledged exceeded \$62,000,000.

A staunch advocate of more general education -- more basic science as well as more humanities and social science -- in the engineering curriculum, Dr. Killian believes that the problem is to provide a common core of studies which will contribute toward a man's effectiveness as an individual and as a citizen, regardless of his occupation.

Dr. Killian has, therefore, consistently supported changes to balance the Institute's professional curriculum with such courses, activities, and environment as will give the graduate depth as well as breadth. He feels that not only does the scientific environment stimulate first-rate work in social science, but also that the presence of such a program enables M.I. T. to turn out more efficient scientists and engineers -- and citizens better qualified to serve their fellows.

"Engineers in industry," Dr. Killian points out, "usually are placed in highly specialized positions. If they have not absorbed in their college background the impetus to broaden themselves, they tend to become increasingly specialized. If we can supply that impetus, we will create more leaders."

Early in his administration, the Institute, in response to a Faculty Committee recommendation, established a School of Humanities and Social Studies. This school gives formal recognition to M.I. T.'s long-established courses in general education and in social science and develops new sequences in the

(more)



humanities for the professional programs of M.I. T.'s other schools. It has the responsibility for providing the strongest possible program for students studying in the fields of science, engineering, architecture, and management. Another more recent step is the inauguration at M.I. T. of a "double major" course of study. Undergraduates in this program combine studies in science or engineering with humanities and social sciences; they thus have broad preparation for graduate work in the professions or for non-professional careers starting immediately after graduation.

The Institute was further helped to play its rightful role in the development of potential leaders for industry when, in 1952, a School of Industrial Management was established through gifts of \$6,250,000 from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Inc. Nucleus of the school was M.I. T.'s Department of Business and Engineering Administration, which since 1914 had combined scientific training with education in business administration. Similar in concept, the School of Industrial Management correlates even more fully the complex problems of management in modern technical industry with science, engineering, and research. Consistent with Dr. Killian's basic premise, the School's objective is to make the young men of today better equipped to meet the exacting demands of industrial management when they become the industrial executives of tomorrow.

Born in Blacksburg, S. C., on July 24, 1904, Dr. Killian is the son of Mrs. James R. Killian, who lives in Columbus Ga., and the late Mr. Killian. He was educated in the high school of Thomson, Ga., and the McCallie School of Chattanooga, Tenn., and studied at Trinity College, now Duke University,

(more)



at Durham, N. C., from 1921 to 1923, when he transferred to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

He received the honorary degree of Doctor of Science from Middlebury College in 1945, from Bates College in 1950, from the University of Havana in 1953, and from Lowell Technological Institute and Notre Dame University in 1954. In 1947, Union College awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, as did Bowdoin College, Northeastern University, and Duke University in 1949; Boston University and Harvard University in 1950; Williams College, Lehigh University, and the University of Pennsylvania in 1951; the University of Chattanooga in 1954; Tufts University in 1955; and the University of California and Amherst College in 1956. Drexel Institute of Technology conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Engineering in 1948.

Dr. Killian is a member of the Science Advisory Committee of the Office of Defense Mobilization; Honorary Board of Judges of the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild; Board of Trustees, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation; Chairman of the Board of Trustees and a member of the Executive Committee of the Nutrition Foundation; Trustee of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; Board of Directors, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, and Deputy Chairman of the Board (1956- ). Dr. Killian is also President of the Board of Trustees of "Atoms for Peace Awards, Inc." He is one of the original incorporators and a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute for Defense Analyses, Inc.; and a Director of Research Corporation. In 1956, he was appointed by President Eisenhower to be Chairman of the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities, and in this capacity he serves as a Special Assistant to the President.

(more)



Dr. Killian was Chairman of the Air University Board of Visitors from 1951 to 1952 and of the Army Scientific Advisory Panel from 1951-56; a member of the President's Advisory Committee on Management from 1950 to 1952; a member of the Board of Visitors of the U.S. Naval Academy from 1953 to 1955; a member of the President's Communications Policy Board (1950-51). He was a member of the Committee for the White House Conference on Education (1954-56); Ford Scholarship Board (1951-52, 1955- ); General Motors National Scholarship Committee (1955-56); and was formerly a trustee and president of the Boston Lying-In Hospital.

Author of numerous articles in the field of engineering education and administration, Dr. Killian also served as Treasurer of the M.I. T. Alumni Association from 1927 to 1939 and was a special lecturer in publishing at Simmons College, Boston, from 1935 to 1938.

His awards include the President's Certificate of Merit (1948), the Freedoms Foundation Award (1952), the Significant Sig Award of Sigma Chi Fraternity (1952), and the Certificate of Appreciation (1953) and the Decoration for Exceptional Civilian Service (1957) from the Department of the Army. Dr. Killian is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a member of Boston's St. Botolph Club, Union Club, Club of Odd Volumes, Algonquin Club, Engineers Club, Thursday Evening Club, Examiner Club, and Saturday Club; the Century Club of New York; the University Clubs of Boston and New York; and the Cosmos Club of Washington. His fraternity is Sigma Chi, and in 1949 he was named honorary member of Phi Beta Kappa and Tau Beta Pi.

Dr. Killian was married in 1929 to Miss Elizabeth Parks of Asheboro, N. C., a graduate of Wellesley College. They have one daughter, Carolyn (Mrs. Paul R. Staley), and a son, Rhyne Meredith Killian.