Albert Ghiorso Biography

Albert Ghiorso

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Biography

Ghiorso was born in Vallejo, California, on July 15, 1915. He received his bachelor of science degree from the University of California in 1937 and, in 1966, was awarded an honorary Ph.D. from Gustavus Adolphus College.

Ghiorso has been involved in the discovery of every synthetic element from americium (number 95) through element 106. In 1944, for example, working with Glenn T. Seaborg and R. A. James, he produced americium by bombarding plutonium -239 with alpha particles.

In later years, his research teams have explored the possibilities of producing heavier elements by using ions, such as beryllium-9, nitrogen -14, and oxygen-16, as projectiles in the accelerator at the University of California at Berkeley. Working with T. Sikkeland, A. D. Larsh, and R. M. Latimer in 1961, for example, he produced the first sample of element 103 (lawrencium) by bombarding californium with boron nuclei.

Since 1969, Ghiorso has been director of the Heavy Ion Linear Accelerator at Berkeley. His research interests also include the development of nuclear fission counters, electrical apparatus used in the study of nuclear radiation, and reactions produced by heavy ions.