George Speri Sperti Biography

George Speri Sperti

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Biography

A prolific inventor of many different products, George Speri Sperti was born in Covington, Kentucky. While studying electrical engineering at the University of Cincinnati, Sperti invented the K-vas meter, a device for measuring large-scale consumption of electricity. The Westinghouse Electric Corporation bought Sperti's apparatus for $30,000.

After receiving his degree in 1923, Sperti worked in the research lab of the Union and Duncan electric companies in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Lafayette, Indiana, respectively. He then returned to the University of Cincinnati, where he co-founded the Basic Science Research Laboratory and served as its director for ten years. During this time, Sperti developed a process of increasing the vitamin D content of milk by means of irradiation. General Foods bought the process for $300,000, and Sperti put the money back into the laboratory.

In 1935 Sperti founded the Institutum Divi Thomae in cooperation with the Catholic Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Named after St. Thomas Aquinas, the institute was a scientific research and graduate studies center later called the St. Thomas Institute for Advanced Studies. Sperti directed the Institute until 1988 and supported it with profits from his many inventions.

Sperti and his laboratory held more than 120 patents. Among Sperti's inventions are: Preparation H, the well-known hemorrhoid treatment; Aspercreme, a medication for arthritis relief; the Sperti sunlamp; a meat tenderizer; a process for freeze-drying orange juice concentrate; ultraviolet germicidal devices; burn ointment; yeast enrichment of animal feed; and many cosmetics and medical creams. Sperti died in Cincinnati at the age of ninety-one.