

Dr. Shirley Fitzsimonds Wakefield

Class of January, 1953

The accomplishments of Dr. Shirley Fitzsimonds Wakefield would stand on their own merit in the world of science. Her credentials alone would qualify her for consideration to be on the Wall of Inspiration, but Dr. Wakefield is more than just a scientist. Dr. Wakefield was a pioneer. Graduating from Wauwatosa High School in 1953, Dr. Wakefield entered a world of higher education where many women were training to be nurses, teachers or typists. She, however, would go on to achieve a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Dr. Wakefield was the only woman in this unique program at UW. She later earned her Ph.D. in Physical Chemistry from the University of Cincinnati. She was the first woman engineer at General Electric's Aircraft Engines Advanced Engineering Group. Dr. Wakefield was involved in highly classified work on military engines for aircraft, including the B-1 and B-2 Bombers. She was often the only woman in a room full of male Generals and Admirals explaining her work, some of which remains classified information to this day. Dr. Wakefield is listed in the American Men and Women of Science and Who's Who of American Women.

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