

A LETTER SPARKS A TREASURE TROVE OF MEMORIES

In September 2021, The NMT President's Office received an email seeking help in finding information about a former NMT employee, **Marvin Lamar Kempton**. For 40 years Lamar Kempton was the Director (and in many ways the architect) of the Terminal Effects Research and Analysis (TERA) organization, better known today as the Energetic Materials Research and Testing Center (EMRTC).

Dear President Wells,

While completing a 4th grade school project, my nine year-old son and I came across the [2013 Summer Gold Pan] while searching online for my grandfather, Lamar Kempton (1920-1994). Lamar was referred to as the "original King of the Mountain" in this 2013 Gold Pan piece about NMT President Daniel Lopez and others by Valerie Kimble.

I have many fond memories of rocks and minerals in Lamar's office there at Tech, and informally exploring tanks and other war relics near M Mountain. Lamar would gain access to these areas by a flick of the hand at the guarded gates.

My grandparents lived up on the hill above campus and the golf course at 1201 Apache Drive. Lamar hauled in a large mushroom shaped rock [photo]. Socorro is where my parents attended high school and met. The original hand-made Chief in the high school floor was crafted by my uncle Stuart, Lamar's eldest son.

If there are still people there who can share any literature or stories about my grandfather, my kids would love it. As would my nephews. And my first cousins and their children. Some of us first cousins are becoming grandparents ourselves.

Lamar passed away before the internet really took hold of the world's stories. Thus it is lovely to see him on the internet, but I'm sure there is much more. Other than my experience as his granddaughter and the few very special newspaper articles clipped into the family album, I don't know much about his career.

Sincerely,
Stephani Crespin
Granddaughter to Lamar Kempton



"He hauled in a large table-shaped rock to the front yard where his family gathered for decades to enjoy a picnic and some cold watermelon on a warm summer evening."

The Advancement Office provided the family with a few photos and memories and offered to publish their search in the Gold Pan. Those inspired the family to conduct their own extended treasure hunt. They found and assembled several historical documents and personal snippets to share with us.

We would like to share some of the treasures they found with our readers (see next page) for two reasons:

First, do any of our readers have memories of Lamar Kempton they can share with the family? Photos? Stories? If so, send them to advancement@nmt.edu (or mail them to Advancement, 801 Leroy Place, Socorro, NM 87801) and we'll make sure they're sent to the family for their archives.

Second, we hope this inspires alumni and friends to look into their own NMT family histories. Do you have stories or photos or documents of your experiences at NMT? A relative's experiences? An ancestor's? **We want to preserve ephemeral moments of NMT history; major or minor events that may not have made it into official (i.e., searchable) online documents.**

We will be creating an archive on our Advancement website for stories, histories and memories of NMT alumni / staff / faculty (*we're starting with Kempton and a few notable alumni memories recently shared with us*). Send us your digital photos, scan your fading documents, write up your memories for us to preserve and share digitally with alumni and friends. *Note: The Office for Advancement reserves the right to select which memories are published.*

MARVIN LAMAR KEMPTON - AN NMT LIFE

Family / Personal

Marvin Lamar Kempton was born September 5, 1920, in Lone Star, AZ. Inspired by his parents to mountaineer, Lamar had his own mine and tended to two cabins during his time off of work in the Magdalena mountains.

Lamar married Leva Gene Stewart in 1940; they had four children: Stuart (now deceased), Pamela, Brent, and Wes,

Two of Brent's children attended NMT. **Nathan Kempton** attended prior to transferring to BYU Idaho in 2006 to finish his degree in Electrical Engineering. **Jared Kempton** earned a B.S. in Basic Science in 2006 and started his career in Chemical Engineering but became a teacher, earning a Master for Science Teachers in 2013. He loves teaching and is one of those teachers who makes a difference in his students' lives.

In his free time, he loved tending to his garden at home in Socorro (which included raspberries and cherry tomatoes) as well as his lawn and rock collection (see photo previous page).

Lamar befriended a roadrunner whose visits were rewarded with cheese; he trained the roadrunner to come through the kitchen door to quickly retrieve its snack.

Education / Career

Lamar attended the University of Arizona, earning a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering in 1942 and then was awarded an Honorary Master's in Engineering by U of AZ in 1958.



Secretary of the Navy presents the Distinguished Public Service Award to Kempton, 1957

In the early 1940's he worked for an aircraft manufacturing plant in Goodyear, AZ writing engineering specs, standards, and process control. In 1946 (or possibly 1949), at the invitation of then-NMT President Workman, Lamar began a robust career as Director of Terminal Effects Research and Analysis (TERA) for 40 years. A business card notes his job title was "Director of TERA, Director Industrial/Research Park, Senior Research Engineer." According to his TERA bio he was also internationally recognized as an authority in ordnance and weapon systems design, testing and evaluation.

He held a number of patents, for original ordnance components and was originator of many warhead design concepts, including rod-fragment controlled-motion warhead, selectively aimable warhead, and metallic-fuel-enhanced, focused-gas warhead.

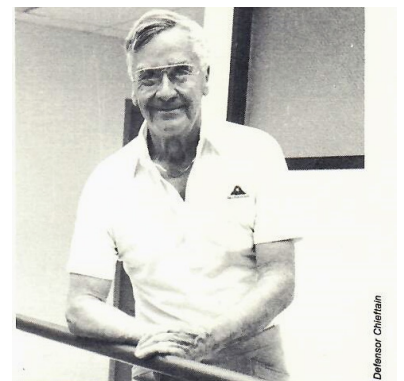
In August, 1957, the Secretary of the Navy granted him a Distinguished Public Service Award for his outstanding services to the Department of the Navy in the fields of scientific research and development of a new type of warhead of significantly improved lethality against aircraft, citing "the first real breakthrough in explosives warhead design since the conception of guided missiles."

TERA is credited with bringing two major companies to the Institute's 1980's research park – Aerojet Ordnance Company and Honeywell, Inc.'s Defense Systems Division.

Lamar retired from TERA June 30, 1987 and passed away on September 6, 1994.



The Kempton family (1965 photo)



Lamar Kempton, 1986