



### **John Van Nostrand Dorr (1872–1962)**

1997 Inductee from Mining's Past

John Dorr was born in Newark, New Jersey, on January 6, 1871. His early education came at a private school conducted by his mother after the death of his father. At seventeen, he went to work for Thomas A. Edison at his New Jersey Laboratory, becoming an “Edison Pioneer”. Recognizing that he needed more technical education, he entered Rutgers University and graduated in 1894.

Dorr's early career after college began in Colorado and the Black Hills at small gold mines, where he learned that marginal economics can be the mother of invention. His 1904 invention of the Dorr classifier, financed by associates savings and funds borrowed from a miners union, avoided high cost, batch operation by allowing continuous processing. Since then, his inventions, including the Dorr agitator and thickener, have gone into worldwide use in mining, chemical, water supply, and sanitary industries. After a life-long friendship with Edwin L. Oliver, who had made contributions similar to Dorr's in filtration processing, the Dorr Company and Oliver United Filters merged in 1955 to form the present Dorr-Oliver Incorporated.

Dorr received many medals, awards and honorary degrees and founded the Dorr Foundation. Noting the increasing part played by catalysis in modern industry, he suggested that the foundation might play a role using resources consisting largely of brains and imagination. The right shoulder safety guide line markings on highways, now used widely in the U.S. and Europe, was a Dorr Foundation promoted development, which was first used on the Merritt Parkway in Connecticut. In 1949, a Chemical Engineering magazine editorial said, “The contribution which Dorr's inventions have made to mankind are probably greater than those of any other chemical or metallurgical engineer of our times.”