

JAMES ROBERTSON AWARD

James R. Robertson Timeline

- Born June 20, 1898
- Graduated High School June 1916 (Educated Guess (EG))
- Lifelong Seattle resident (EG)
- WW I Veteran in Army Signal Corps and saw combat in France
- Worked as Seattle Water Department meter reader and State Highway Department Bridge Inspector while attending the UW
- Graduated from UW in 1924 and joined city engineering staff as a “computer”
- Served much of his career at the City as a Principal Assistant City Engineer, with permanent appointment to that post by Roy Morse, City Engineer, in 1957. Widely known both as a bridge construction engineer and as technical administrator, he had a reputation as a firm but kindly executive of a department of more than 1100 employees. He oversaw construction of the Ballard Bridge and was the City’s chief engineering liaison with the State Highway Department on all their major projects affecting Seattle during his tenure.
- Retired June 28, 1963, after 39 years with the City. Died in 1982(EG)



James R. Robertson Affiliations

Member of the UW’s ASCE student chapter in 1923 and 1924

President of the Seattle Engineer’s Club

He was one of 23 original petitioners, in 1955, to National APWA for the formation of the Washington Chapter, and was apparently the chair of the temporary Chapter committee, as the Executive Director directed National’s letter of acceptance of the petition to him on July 26, 1955. James Robertson continued to serve behind the scenes and was a Board Member but never a Chapter Officer. He served as Region IX’s Washington State representative for at least four years.

James R. Robertson Award

The award was officially instituted on October 19th, 1962 during Public Works Day for the World’s Fair. James Robertson was the first awardee. This is a quote from the Seattle Times article of October 20th, 1962:

“Establishment of an annual state-wide engineering achievement award named for James Robertson, assistant city engineer. was disclosed during a program at the World's Fair. The award, a plaque to carry names of annual winners, has been instituted by the Washington State Chapter of the American Public Works Association. Yesterday was Public Works Day at the Fair. More than 300 engineers and civic leaders attended a luncheon at Club 21, sponsored by the Uptown Kiwanis Club. Robert! Burgher. Chicago, Director of the Public Works Association. said the Robertson award can "be an inspiration to those young men of ability who will, we hope, select public service as their career."

