

Richard P. Feynman

1918 - 1988

Richard P. Feynman is generally acknowledged to be one of the giants of our age in theoretical physics. His contributions to the body of our understanding are as many as they are profound. Quantum electrodynamics was perhaps the jewel of his oeuvres, but his ability to teach and communicate were legendary and included Feynman diagrams for graduate students (“computational power for the masses”) and Feynman lectures for college freshmen (and their professors). In more recent time Feynman’s parton model found immediate application in the clarification of high-energy processes. Feynman had a great interest in computing, an interest which goes back to his work at Los Alamos in the 1940s. More recently he was deeply involved in the construction of an ultra-fast computer with applications to such exotica of advanced computer concepts as neural networks and cellular automata. Feynman was also interested in art. In naming this Center after him, it is our fervent hope that out of this architecturally elegant computer house good science will emerge which would have pleased him very much.

- Leon M. Lederman

The Feynman Computing Center at Fermilab

The Feynman Computing Center is more than just a beautiful addition to the Fermilab site. It is a building that really works. It houses several support groups and the powerful central computing facilities of Fermilab. It is also a building with brains. The Association of Energy Engineers has recognized the building’s efficiency with its annual Corporate Energy Management Award.

The building is an elegant, three-story building of approximately 74,000 square feet. It provides room for the growth necessitated by the increasing importance of computing to the pursuit of high-energy physics, the field to which Richard P. Feynman contributed so much. The building’s precast concrete backbone is supported on a steel frame, as is the north-facing glass facade. The precast panels provide both protection from the heat of the sun and a reflection of the graceful sweep of Fermilab’s Ramsey Auditorium. The Feynman Computing Center is very much a reflection of the tastes of Robert R. Wilson, Director Emeritus of Fermilab and architectural consultant for this new structure.

Construction of the Feynman Computing Center was funded as part of a Congressional Line Item in the federal budget, the Fermilab Central Computing Upgrade Project. The Project was begun under the leadership of Al Brenner, then Head of the Fermilab Computing Department.

- Jeffrey A. Appel

