The Star-Democrat

August 2, 1985 Easton, Maryland **Friday Edition** Thirty-five Cents

85-1

Miles, value analyst, dies

85-1

EASTON — Lawrence Delos Miles, the developer of the techniques of value engineering and value analysis, died at his home, "Sedgefield," on Maxmore Creek, near Easton, died Thursday, Aug. 1, 1985. He was 81.

In a career of nearly four decades, Mr. Miles saved the United States and foreign businesses billions. His art, elevated to near-religious status in Japan, has been partially responsible for that nation's post-World War II industrial successes.

Mr. Miles' system, developed while he was still working for the General Electric Co., looks at functions, establishes values of those functions and then arrives at the cheapest way of achieving them. In its broadest aspect, it's an entire way of thinking. At the least, it's a way to save money on an auto part.

The Japanese began studying value analysis shortly after World War II. Their companies were far behind the West in technology and quality, and they needed to catch up.

After catching up technologically, the Japanese used value analysis to cut costs, especially

LAWRENCE D. MILES

in automobiles and electronics. Mr. Miles had written a book on the subject and he was invited to lecture extensively there.

In December, 1983, when Japanese industrial leaders gathered to honor three of the country's

Please see MILES, p. 8A

Miles

from page 1-a

biggest companies, the major prize was the new Lawrence Delos Miles Award. Mr. Miles and his wife, Eleanor, went to Tokyo for the awards ceremony sponsored by the Value Engineering Society of Japan.

Mr. Miles' interest in cost-cutting came naturally growing up on a farm in O'Neill, Neb. He said in an interview with The Star-Democrat last year, "We pinched pennies. At GE, it bothered me that everything seemed to cost so darn much."

In 1925, he graduated from Nebraska Wesleyan University with an AB degree in education. From 1925-26 he was a principal and teacher at Winnebago (Neb.) High School. Then he became an assistant cashier at the First National Bank of Winnebago. The next year, he was teller with Security National Bank in Creighton, Neb. From 1928-1931, he attended the University of Nebraska Engineering College in Lincoln, receiving a B.S. degree in electrical engineering.

In 1932, despite the Depression, he landed a job with General Electric, where he stayed for 32 years, practicing value engineering until 1964 and teaching it to more than 10,000 people. In 1957, as a result of his work teaching the art to the U.S. Navy, he received the Distinguished Public Service Award, the highest for a civilian.

He retired in 1964, but continued to work as a private consultant and to hold a three-day meeting of the directors of the Society of American Value Engineering (he was its first president) each fall at his home.

His book, *Techniques of Value Analysis*, was published in 1961 by McGraw Hill Co. of New York. It is now printed in 12

Miles talked about his frustration at the fact that his techniques are so much more widely accepted outside than inside the United States. He hoped to change that situation, but admitted that the campaign had been difficult.

"Frustrated isn't the word. Sad is better. We have so many people who could make good products. And doggone it, we have the ability to design and manufacture better products.

"It's sad that such good methods are available and close but not being used while factories are being closed and people are being put out of work.

"We could compete worldwide. It would mean we would use much more of our own products. It would affect the balance of trade because we wouldn't have to ship in automobiles and audio products. We'd do it all ourselves.

"To you it will sound as if all this stuff isn't true," Mr. Miles told his interviewer. "But it is true. I only wish I was 30 instead of 80."

Born in Harvard, Neb., April 21, 1904, he was the son of the late Delos and Vanetta Miles.

He was the recipient of the Coffin Award, GE's highest honor; the Alumni Medal of Honor from Nebraska Wesleyan University; an award from the Value Engineering and Management Society of South Africa; the Presidential Citation given by the president of the Society of Japanese Value Engineers; and a medal from Associacao Brasileira De Administracacao De Material, Sao Paulo, Brazil. In May 1976, Mr. and Mrs. Miles were presented the Fallon Value in Life Award by the Society of American

from the Association of German Engineers, and another achievement award from GE.

Mr. Miles was the first male member of the Junior Auxiliary of Memorial Hospital at Easton. He and his wife were the first couple in the Auxiliary ever to give more than 1,000 hours of volunteer service. He also introduced the defensive driving course to Talbot County through the American Association of Retired Persons and taught 11 courses.

He is is survived by his wife, Eleanor R. Miles, whom he married Nov. 3, 1968; one son, Dennis D. Miles of San Francisco, Calif.; one stepdaughter, Jane Osgatharp of Montpelier, Vt.; one brother, R.C. Miles of Murraysville, Pa.; and five grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held at the Newnam Funeral Home in Easton Saturday, Aug. 10 at 3:30 p.m. The Rev. Harold M. Davis, a retired Methodist minister, will officiate. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family.

Memorial donations may be made to the Talbot Hospice Foundation, P.O. Box 480, Easton, Md. 21601.