

Mr. Harold Finger

NETS-2011 Honorary General Chair



Harold B. Finger has been working as an independent consultant since his retirement in May 1991 from the U.S. Council for Energy Awareness, where he served as President and CEO since January 1983. He is consulting in energy policy and programs, space systems and programs, urban development and housing issues, and government management working with government, industry, and non-profit organizations.

Mr. Finger received a BS Degree in Mechanical Engineering from the City College of New York in 1944 and an MS in Aeronautical Engineering from the Case Institute of Technology in 1950. In 1957-1958, he also had special training in Nuclear Engineering at NASA's predecessor, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) Lewis Flight Propulsion Laboratory in

Cleveland, Ohio.

After graduating from the City College in 1944, Mr. Finger joined the NACA as an Aeronautical Research Scientist responsible for aircraft engine and compressor and turbine research. He held increasingly responsible positions and in October 1958, when the National Aeronautics and Space Administration was established, he was asked to come to Washington to lead NASA's space power and nuclear energy programs. From 1960-67, he managed the newly established Space Nuclear Propulsion Office, a joint office of the Atomic Energy Commission and NASA, responsible for nuclear rocket propulsion development while also serving as Director of NASA's Space Power and Nuclear Systems. (He'll be discussing the accomplishments of those programs in providing a capability for deep space exploration in the opening session of the 2011 NETS Program.) In 1965, he was also appointed Director of the AEC's Space Nuclear Systems Division including responsibility for radioisotope and reactor power systems. He left those three positions to serve from 1967-69 as NASA's Associate Administrator for Organization and Management including all administrative functions as well as university programs and aerospace technology applications.

In March 1969, Mr. Finger was appointed the first Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development where he established a broad program in housing assistance, housing technology, housing management, community development and urban planning. Many of these led to new approaches to help provide our nation's housing needs.

Mr. Finger left the government at the end of 1972 to join the General Electric Company as General Manager of a new Center for Energy Systems in Washington and as Manager of the Electric Utility Engineering Operation in Schenectady, NY. In 1980, he was named Staff Executive of GE's Power Systems Strategic Planning and Development at the corporate headquarters. In January 1983, Mr. Finger left GE to become President and CEO of the U.S. Council for Energy Awareness, an energy analysis and public information organization involved mainly with electric utility matters, including nuclear energy systems. That organization later became the current Nuclear Energy Institute after Harold Finger retired in 1991.

Since Mr. Finger retired, he has continued to be involved in all these fields of his past experience. He is President of the NASA Alumni League. Mr. Finger has been a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration since 1970 and has served on its Board and serves on many of its Panels. He is a life-time Trustee of the Board of the National Housing Conference. He served on the Technical Advisory Committee of the DOE's Solar Energy Research Institute. He has received many honors and awards including NASA's Outstanding Leadership Medal, is an honorary member of the American Institute of Architects, has been elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics and has received its James H. Wyld Propulsion Award. He is a member of the American Nuclear Society, the American Society for Public Administration, the American Astronautical Society and the Planetary Society. He has received the Society of Automotive Engineers' Manley Memorial Award, the Schreiber-Spence Award of the University of New Mexico for contributions to space nuclear power and propulsion, and was elected a member of the Cosmos Club in 1975.