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Rainwater, James

b. Dec. 9, 1917, Council, Idaho, U.S.

d. May 31, 1986, Yonkers, N.Y.

in full LEO JAMES RAINWATER American physicist who won a share of the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1975 for his part in determining the asymmetrical shapes of certain atomic nuclei.

Educated at the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, and Columbia University, where he received his doctorate in 1946, Rainwater worked on the Manhattan Project to develop the atomic bomb during World War II. In 1949 he began formulating a theory that not all atomic nuclei are spherical, as was then generally believed. The theory was tested experimentally and confirmed by Danish physicists Aage N. Bohr and Ben R. Mottelson. For their work the three scientists were awarded jointly the 1975 Nobel Prize for Physics.

Rainwater was a professor of physics at Columbia from 1952 and Pupin professor of physics there from 1982. He also conducted valuable research on X rays and took part in Atomic Energy Commission and naval research projects. He was awarded the AEC's Ernest Orlando Lawrence Prize for Physics in 1963.

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