

Foreword by

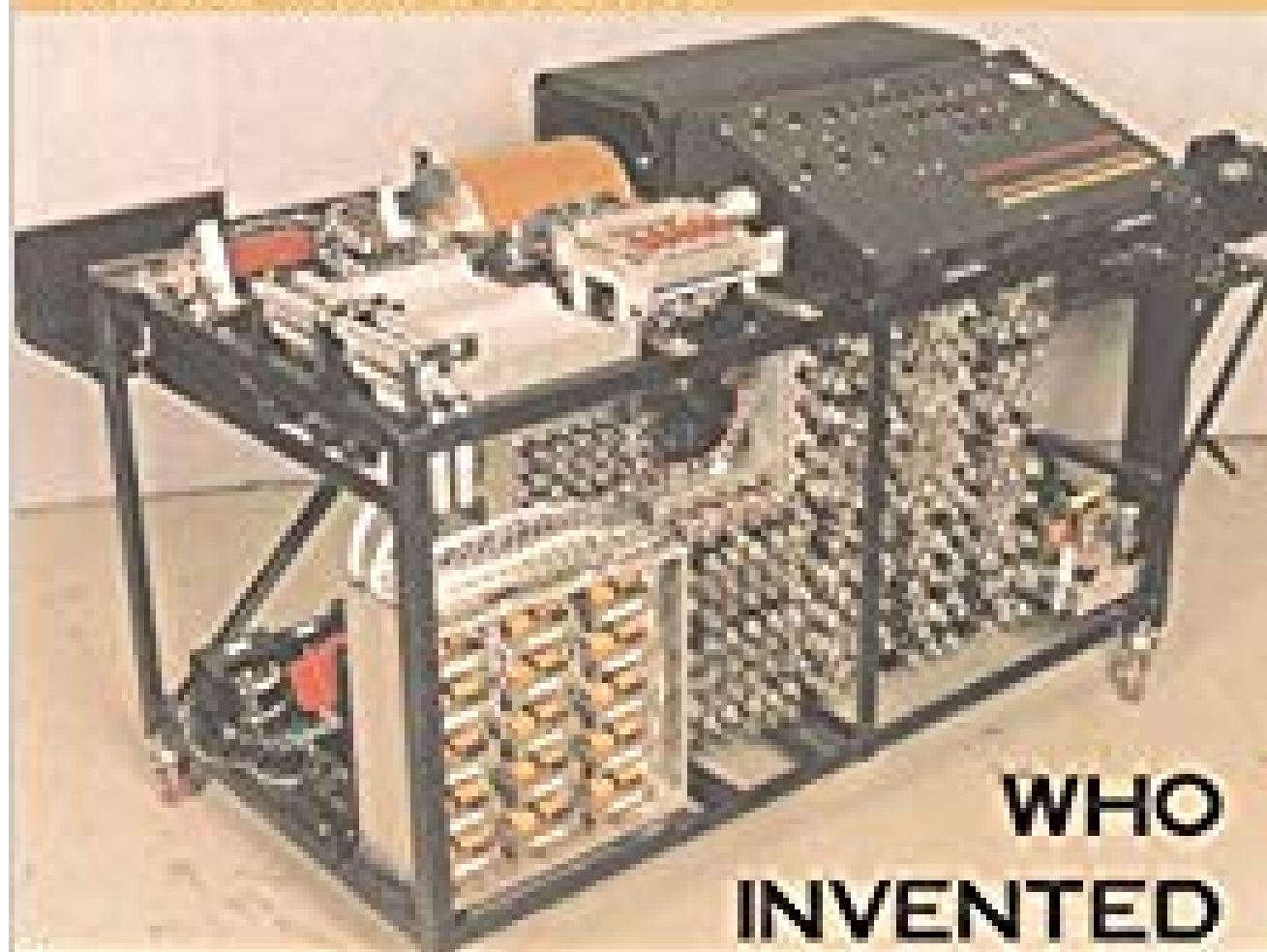
DOUGLAS HOFSTADTER

author of the Pulitzer prize-winning

Gödel, Escher, Bach

An Eternal Golden Braid

ALICE ROWE BURKS



**WHO
INVENTED**

THE COMPUTER?

**THE LEGAL BATTLE
THAT CHANGED
COMPUTING HISTORY**

Alice Rowe Burks and

Who Invented the Computer? The Legal Battle That Changed Computing History



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In 1973, Federal government District Judge Earl R. Larson issued a ruling in a patent case that was to have profound and long-lasting implications for the dawning computer revolution. With meticulous research, Alice Rowe Burks examines both the trial and its own aftermath, presenting telling evidence in convincing and absorbing style, and leaving without doubt about the actual originator of what provides been called the greatest invention of the 20th century. and additional large competition. If Judge Larson got ruled the additional way, in favor of the patent claim, subsequent manufacturers of processing hardware would have had to secure a license from Sperry Rand, and the course of computing history may likely have been very different from the galloping revolution just about everyone has witnessed previously three years. Atanasoff. Looking back again today from the digital world at that which was then a little-publicized trial, it really is clear that the judge's decision had tremendous repercussions. The judge came to the conclusion that in fact the ENIAC had not been the first pc but was a derivative of an obscure computer known as the ABC, which had been developed in the late thirties by a generally unknown professor of physics and mathematics at Iowa Condition University, called John V. This book centers on this crucial trial, arguing that Judge Larson correctly evaluated the facts and made the right decision, despite the fact that many in the computing community have never accepted Atanasoff as the legitimate inventor of the electronic computer., which claimed to carry the patent on the 1st computer dubbed the "ENIAC" and was demanding huge royalties on all electronic data processing sales by Honeywell Inc.



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Kudos is due This was a hugely informative and fascinating account of the birth of the pre-eminent technology of our age. The Burks' direct involvement for the reason that event was a tremendous asset with their storytelling, and who could blame them if indeed they became just a little partial to a traditional underdog story? A suggested read. It really is factual and really should be read by anyone who would like a

good account of the courtroom case. Burks, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA Excellent Scholarship Extremely impressed with the amount of scholarship poured into this reserve. Eckert and Mauchly proved just as susceptible to the temptation to play Prometheus in the 20th hundred years. The Burks' account might have been a tad richer if those arch opportunists had been set in context of their venal predecessors. But in any case, vast kudos is due them for, more than anyone else, assisting to make sure that John Vincent Atanasoff finally started to have the recognition from background that he deserves. Lots of facts I liked this publication. The only strike from this account in my view is the absence of some historic perspective, putting the dispute in the context of the geneses of other landmark technologies. Today, to Jean Bartik's charge against me. I'll close by saying that I am sorry my romantic relationship with Jean Bartik has come to this certainly angry and bitter end. Expert witnesses interpret evidence in accord with their expertise. Paul Winsor was put through examination by both Honeywell and defendant Sperry Rand attorneys. On the main one hand, it appears that she actually is fighting for what she (and the judge) believes to be the truth and she is a champion for truth and correct recognition. But I question why she bothers, provided the overpowering tendencies against her. And I wonder why she is alone in this. She cites hardly any evidence of others who agree with her trigger or who are willing to consider up the battle as she does. Is usually she really only in this? Alice's reserve on this early period of electronic computing is completely documented. Where was Atanasoff to help her through the critical years? We are left wondering if the writer is in some way motivated by the overwhelming public ignorance of what was decided in courtroom and feels a genuine desire to aid the underdog (Atanasoff who, it appears, was unable or uninterested to battle for this best himself). Or if the author is merely anti-Mauchly. One way or the other, I question if she is a little bit blinded by her bias. That said, she writes well and her materials is certainly interesting. It is certainly that they have the facts on their side, their staying opponents can only vacation resort to definitional quibbling or personal smears. Read it and form your own bottom line about "Who created the computer?" Story that needed to be told I must say I enjoyed this. This reserve ought to be required reading for anybody severe about learning the annals of digital computers. Gripping Story about the Invention of the Computer Fantastic story about the first days of the computer! And the champion is ..Before the trial, Judge Larson, to his credit, did have tutoring on the technical areas of the case he was about to try, but neither Winsor nor any other expert witness served in that capacity.. If we utilize the following: 1. A working model has to be created then the winner in this race may be the Cambridge University EDSAC. The incorporation of a kept program is critical to design and usage of what we realize as a "computer" 2. I believe that the creators of EDSAC attended the critical summer time school in America and also had access to critical reports, but if I have may facts ideal they did have an operational pc running real programs approximately year before other people. Arthur Burks responds to the next Bartik review Arthur Burks responds to the next Bartik review This is a response to Jean Bartik's second Consumer Review of my wife Alice's new book, Who have Invented the Computer? The Legal Fight that Changed Processing History. I have chosen to compose at this time because, in both this and Jean's earlier review (to which Alice responded), I am the thing of a major charge impugning my integrity. Jean Bartik's second review gets the challenging title, "Reply this." It starts by (again) questioning Judge Larson's impartiality in the ENIAC patent trial: "Why," it asks, "did he have Honeywell's primary consultant, Paul Winsor, as the court computer professional?" The answer is that Winsor did not serve as a courtroom computer professional, but was an expert witness for plaintiff Honeywell. I've consulted Charles Contact, a chief attorney for the Honeywell part, and he assures me that such was the case. He explained that there are two kinds of witnesses at trial, as called by each of the two opposing sides. Both folks have written upon this very important subject, not out of "sanctimonious viciousness," but out of concern for the preservation of an accurate history. If you prefer a somewhat relentless tome of continual struggles by the author thereafter to uphold the decision of that case (and, it seems for reasons unknown, to constantly discredit Mauchly), browse the next two sections. There is definitely nothing improper, or even dubious, in hearing from witnesses on

either side of a dispute, whether reality or expert, in a system that encompasses direct examination, cross-examination, re-immediate, and re-cross. While the materials is factual, and the arguments sound, it does feel that the author includes a personal involvement and her personal opinion overshadows the publication a bit.. As to Larson's conduct of the trial, the state transcript reveals an extremely proficient and attentive judge who was equally tight with both Honeywell and the Sperry Rand lawyers during their examination of witnesses and demonstration of evidence. Any more "reviews" should include their own documentation-some sustainable evidence-and should avoid ad hominem episodes and idle speculation on motives. The fact that Sperry Rand chose never to appeal your choice, in a case on which so many huge amount of money rode, is testament to the merit of that decision. The book is split into three sections. As in her 1st review, she accuses me of having threatened to blackmail John Mauchly into adding my name to the ENIAC patent, except that the earlier review experienced it the patent software. The foundation of this allegation is now revealed to end up being Mauchly's widow, Kay Mauchly (Antonelli), and the alleged threat is that I would testify in the ENIAC patent trial for Honeywell if Mauchly did not agree to add my name, but for Sperry Rand (right here known as Univac) if he did acknowledge. Like Jean, both Alice and I take no satisfaction in this exercise. Furthermore, before the trial and at Mauchly's request, I signed affidavits giving facts about progress in the look of the ENIAC that the Sperry lawyers believed would help their case for the Eckert-Mauchly patent. Jean also promises that "John Mauchly testified at the trial that Burks had tried to bribe/blackmail him for his testimony." I've a complete duplicate of Mauchly's trial testimony, which Alice and I both studied while writing our 1988 reserve, and which we now have reviewed again. We find no such testimony by Mauchly, but rather his repeated acknowledgment that yes, Burks (amongst others) did make significant contributions to the ENIAC. Despite the title's assumed caution of a dry legal story, Mrs. Highly recommended. Jean's further statement that the ABC "was in fact 'built' for the trial" appears to be another inexplicable contention that no such machine was actually constructed. Her "knowing that when Atanasoff left to go to NOL, the University threw whatever he had built-in the basement out in the trash" can be erroneous. Atanasoff still left for his wartime assignment to the Naval Ordnance Laboratory in 1942, and Iowa State safeguarded his computer in that basement hallway of the Physics Building for six years before dismantling it. Notably, fundamental parts from the memory space and the arithmetic unit were preserved and were later turned to the Smithsonian Organization, together with photographs. In the event that you only wish to know about the courtroom case, read the first section. I herewith declare emphatically that I never made such a risk, to Mauchly or other people, at the 1967 ACM meeting or somewhere else. And we fervently wish that these unfounded protestations will cease. Why? His decision in the event is a meticulously drawn document that addresses every concern of those attorneys, complete with cross references sustaining the consistency of his findings. Reality witnesses testify about their very own roles and experiences highly relevant to trial problems. Arthur W. Without exception, these too have already been accompanied by concern or derivation disputes - Bell and the telephone, Edison and the light bulb, Singer and the sewing machine, Morse and the telegraph had been all unscrupulous adopters of others' prior concepts and apt to claim credit where it had been not due. This is the best book I've encountered so far on the subject.) Regarding Jean's question on the ultimate utility of John Atanasoff's pc, as distinct from the many basic principles it successfully embodied, Alice's book addresses all of the arguments, pro and con, about the ABC's final state. Maybe the people who developed the bike ought to be credited with inventing the auto. In a nutshell, the Atanasoff-Berry Computer was nowhere near powerful enough to actually be stated in the same sentence as the ENIAC, which performed advanced calculations for the US military for years, before getting the cornerstone of the UNISYS company. Apples and Oranges The ABC is technically the first computer just because a judge said so. Comprehensive and Engaging Surprisingly, this book isn't just an authoritative summary of the invention of the Atanasoff-Berry Pc and the ENIAC, yet is extremely engaging simultaneously. (This is a case where it could have helped to really have the page quantity of

Mauchly's testimony where he's alleged to have produced this charge against me. Burks' work is a very detailed and even very human summary of early computer background and the legal fight that resulted. Tested Wikipedia afterwards and discover the story is still fighting an uphill battle, because there are several vested interest in holding on to ones turf.

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