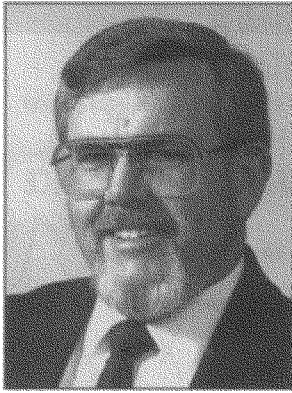# ■ IN MEMORIAM

Dennis O'Connor
1938–1992

Dennis O'Connor, a close personal friend and associate, passed away on February 4, 1992, after a brief illness. Dennis was best known to the AI community for his leadership in the pioneering work that led to the development and successful deployment of xCON and many other expert systems.

Dennis O'Connor was one of Digital's first 400 employees and played a significant role in the growth of the company over the last 30 years. During his 30-year career with Digital, Dennis O'Connor held senior managerial positions in engineering and manufacturing, and most recently, he was a member of the Corporate Information Management and Technology staff.

In the early days of Digital's history, Dennis was involved in the design of the innovative PDP series of processors. Later, he became a member of the manufacturing staff and was the worldwide director of manufacturing technology. In July 1979, Dennis launched the pioneering AI effort around configuring Digital's VAX computer systems in collaboration with John McDermott and Carnegie Mellon University. This effort led to the development of the world's first industrial AI application and significantly influenced the field by spawning numerous other expert systems both at Digital and at other companies around the world.

Dennis was the founder and director of Digital's Artificial Intelligence Technology Center and Digital's Knowledge-Based Applications and Services business unit. He was a member of the Strategy Planning Board of the Concurrent Engineering Research Center at West Virginia University, a leading organization in the development of an enterprise integration framework sponsored by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. He was also a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the *Spang-Robinson Report on Artificial Intelligence*.

Dennis was recently recognized by the American Association for Artificial Intelligence with the first-ever annual Outstanding Contribution Award for Innovative Artificial Intelligence Applications. The American Association for Artificial Intelligence bestowed this award on Dennis for his "sustained contribution to the practical implementation of AI, being a champion of AI within a corporate setting, successful applications of AI technology over time, and significant volunteer work in the field."

Dennis O'Connor was instrumental in the development of visionary business alliances between Digital, universities, and other industrial corporations. Dennis led Digital's involvement with MIT, Carnegie-Mellon, and the Carnegie Group and with the Initiative for Managing Knowledge Assets in partnership with Ford, US West, Texas Instruments, and the Carnegie Group.

Many of us were fortunate to know him over the years and share his friendship. We will always remember his vision, his strong belief in the human potential, and his deep respect for people.

Raj Reddy
Carnegie Mellon University