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# Anton Burg, 99, Expert on Boron Who Led Way to New Materials, Dies

By STUART LAVIETES

**A**nton Burg, an expert on the nonmetallic element boron who developed compounds used as building blocks in the creation of synthetic materials, died on Nov. 19 at his home in Los Angeles. He was 99.

One of Dr. Burg's practical discoveries was a process for creating a boron-based synthetic rubber capable of resisting high temperatures.

The experiments he conducted in the early 1930's as an instructor at the University of Chicago provided groundwork for a graduate student in the laboratory, Herbert C. Brown, who won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1979 for his development of boron compounds.

Dr. Burg joined the faculty of the University of Southern California in 1939, when the university's tiny chemistry department performed virtually no research. He was chosen as chairman the next year and oversaw the department's extensive growth.

Anton Behme Burg was born in Dallas City, Ill., and received his bachelor's and doctoral degrees from the University of Chicago. As an undergraduate, he was a nationally ranked high jumper who credited his success to his knowledge of mathematics and calculus. He barely missed qualifying for the 1928 Olympic team.

Early in his career, Dr. Burg told his colleagues, he was among the first researchers to produce what later became famous as Teflon, which was a byproduct of one of his boron reactions. He recorded the interesting new molecule in his notebooks, the colleagues said, then moved on, leaving the fame of its discovery to scientists at DuPont, who announced it in 1938.

He left no immediate survivors.

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