



Chester F. Carlson

1908-1968

Chester F. Carlson, an American physicist and patent attorney, contributed to imaging science through his invention of electrophotography.

As a young patent engineer, Carlson was aware of the difficulty of getting carbon copies of patent documents and drawings. He decided to develop a device that could make a copy quickly. He investigated aspects of photoconductivity, experimented with various light-sensitive materials, and described the fundamental process of what he called “electrophotography”. In 1938, Carlson and his assistant were successful in replicating an image on a glass plate with an electrostatic charge.

Over the following years, Carlson received several basic patents that he used to market the idea to various corporations. Finally, Battelle Memorial Institute agreed to collaborate on development of the process. In 1946, Haloid Company of Rochester undertook commercial manufacture of the xerographic copier which reached the market in 1950. Haloid Company became Xerox Corporation in 1961.