

IN MEMORIAM: JAMES E. ROGERS, JR.

(September 20, 1947 – December 17, 2018)

On December 17, 2018, the natural gas and electric utility industry lost one of its most renowned and celebrated executives, James E. Rogers, Jr. Known by all as “Jim.” Rogers was able to combine a fierce intellect with a folksy southern charm to inspire and become an agent of change at a time when most electric utility executives were comfortable relying on a stable business model earning stable returns.

Blessed with a sharp wit and earnest demeanor, Rogers took pride as a visionary and iconoclast in the utility industry. He was the first utility CEO to recommend that electric utilities owning transmission develop a business model to move the electrons owned by others (known then as “wheeling”). But his most enduring contribution was the path he forged in leading the electric utility industry to agree to a cap on carbon emissions even while his company owned a significant number of coal-fired power plants.

Rogers became the first CEO in the electric utility industry to speak about the changes needed in the face of climate change, with Duke Energy becoming recognized as a leader in sustainability. In 2010 and 2011 the company was named to the elite Dow Jones Sustainability World Index; it has been a part of the Dow Jones Sustainability Index for North America for the past nine years.

As CEO at Duke Energy, Rogers invested four billion dollars in wind and solar assets. He served as vice chairman of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, and was a founding member of the U.S. Climate Action Partnership, a collaboration of leading businesses and environmental groups that came together to call on the federal government to enact legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Rogers was born in Birmingham, Alabama, spending most of his childhood in Danville, Kentucky, in coal country. He took a job as a reporter for the Lexington Herald-Leader, and worked his way through the University of Kentucky, earning a Bachelor of Business Administration, in 1970 and a Juris Doctor, in 1974. Following graduation from law school, he served as a law clerk for the Supreme Court of Kentucky.

Rogers began his career in energy as an Assistant Attorney General of Kentucky, working as a consumer advocate to challenge the rate increases of utility companies. From there, he moved to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, first as a Trial Attorney, and then as Assistant to the Chief Trial Counsel. From there, he entered the private practice of law as an associate to the Washington D.C. office of the Dallas-based law firm, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld. He was invited to return to the FERC by then General Counsel Charles A. Moore to serve as Deputy General Counsel for Litigation and Enforcement. He ultimately rejoined Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld as a partner.

With his years of legal training, Rogers moved to Houston where he served as Executive Vice President of Interstate Pipelines for the Enron Gas Pipeline

Group, spawning a career trajectory that would lead to multiple industry leadership positions in both the natural gas and electric utility industries. In 1988, he became President, Chairman, and CEO of PSI Energy, ultimately merging PSI with Cincinnati Gas and Electric to become Cinergy, where he served as President and CEO. In 2006, Rogers oversaw the merger of Cinergy and Duke Energy, becoming the combined company's president and CEO. In 2012, Duke Energy merged with Progress Energy to become the largest utility in the United States, with Rogers serving as President, CEO, and Chairman until his retirement in 2013. Upon his retirement, Duke was the country's largest utility by market share.

During the course of his career as CEO of various utilities, Rogers's personable, hands-on management style extended to the subordinates chosen to become his team. In many cases, he oftentimes purposefully selected inexperienced personnel, expecting them to grow into their jobs, and excel. He would hand-select many executives, mentoring them along the way, all while praising them and pressing them to go beyond their expected potential. Multiple stories of these opportunities abounded.

He was an early advocate and promoter of women in leadership in his organizations, naming them to senior executive and senior legal positions.

Rogers devoted considerable personal time and attention to advancing the energy and environmental potential in US-China relations. Following a vacation he took to China with his grandson, he recognized that China possessed one feature missing from the energy ecosystem of the United States to demonstrate and accelerate adoption of advanced energy technologies: scale. Under his leadership, Duke entered into partnerships with that country's largest energy companies, creating projects addressing advanced energy efficiencies, carbon reduction, and smart grid technologies. During the economic recession caused by the 2007-2008 financial crisis in the United States, when access to domestic capital disappeared, Rogers astutely made technology development alliances with Chinese counterparts with a particular focus on how to scale new technologies since China was embarked on a major infrastructure building program. He then used the resulting relationships to develop joint business projects to secure funding from Chinese banks, with Duke's Chinese partners.

Following his departure from Duke, Jim devoted much of his energy to the issue of how rural people in low income nations can get access to clean, sustainable electricity, authoring a book entitled *Lighting the World: Transforming Our Energy Future by Bringing Electricity to Everyone*, which outlined the state of energy poverty, and suggested that addressing this issue offered great potential for improving people's lives in low income nations. He also taught a graduate seminar at Duke University called *Renewables and the Poor*, and lectured at all five of Duke's graduate schools.

Rogers served on the advisory boards of Bloomberg's New Energy Finance, DoubleTime Capital, Invenergy, and Broadscale. He also served on the board of the Energy Solar Association, and Solar Electric Power Association, the Aspen Institute, the Brookings Institution, the Asia Society, the Nicholas Institute on Environmental Policy Solutions at Duke University, and the advisory committee for Sustainable Energy for All (United Nations), and was a member of the Global Board of the Nature Conservancy. He also served on the board of directors of Cigna, a Fortune 500 company.

While at Duke, Rogers was chairman of the Edison Electric Institute (EEI) when it changed its position to support federal climate change legislation in 2009, and also was the founding chairman of the Institute for Electric Efficiency, former co-chair of the Alliance to Save Energy and past co-chair of the National Action Plan for Energy Efficiency. He also was a member of the Boards of the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations, the Nuclear Electric Institute, and the World Association of Nuclear Operators.

Rogers also served on the boards of Applied Materials, Duke Realty Corporation, Bankers Life Holding Corporation, Indiana National Bank and Fifth Third Bancorp, the United States Chamber of Commerce, the Business Roundtable, the National Coal Council, the National Petroleum Council, the American Gas Association. He was a past member of the honorary committee of the joint US-China cooperation on clean energy (JUCCE).

In 2012, Rogers was co-chair of the host committee for the Democratic Convention in Charlotte.

Rogers was the recipient of numerous awards. In 2013, he was given the Edison Electric Institute's Distinguished Leadership Award by his industry peers in recognition of his 25 years of service and exemplary contributions to the electric utility industry. That same year, he was the recipient of the United States Energy Association Award, and was named the most influential person in the power generation industry by Power Engineering magazine and the energy industry's CEO of the Year by Platts. He was the founding chairman of the Institute for Electric Efficiency, former co-chair of the Alliance to Save Energy and past co-chair of the National Action Plan for Energy Efficiency. The Charlotte Business Journal also named Rogers its Business Person of the Year for 2011.

In 2011, Rogers received the Asia Society of Washington's International Business Leadership Award and the Committee of 100's Business Excellence Award for his efforts to improve business relations between the U.S. and China that benefit customers, the environment, and improve dialogue between the two nations. He was also recognized by the U.S.-China Policy Foundation with their Global Executive Leadership Award.

As an active community leader, Rogers received a number of honors and awards for service including from the Boy Scouts of America Distinguished Honoree from the Mecklenburg County Council; the Ellis Island Medal of Honor from the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations (NECO); the 2006 Human Relations Award from the American Jewish Committee, Cincinnati Chapter; the 2005 Ronald McDonald House Lifetime Achievement Award; the 2005 Keystone Center Leadership in Industry Award; the 2004 National Conference for the Community and Justice (NCCJ) Distinguished Service Citation; the 1998 Hebrew Union College Cincinnati Associates Tribute Honoree; and the 1996 Energy Daily Corporate Leadership Award.

Rogers's first marriage, to Robyn McGill, ended in divorce. Survivors include his wife of 41 years, the former Mary Anne Boldrick of Charlotte; three children from his first marriage, Chrissi Morgan of Pebble Beach, Calif., Kara Black of Sandwich, Mass., and Ben Rogers of Madison, N.J.; a brother; two sisters; eight grandchildren; and a great-grandson.

When speaking of the climate change crisis, and how the United States needed to drastically reform its thinking to develop meaningful remedies, Rogers

often spoke of the need to embrace “Cathedral Thinking.” In his view, the architects, artisans, and stonemasons who constructed the world’s renowned cathedrals, which took centuries to build, knew that their finished work would never be enjoyed during their lifetimes. Nonetheless, they toiled for the benefit of future generations. In the same token, he urged policy leaders to adopt the same way of thinking to galvanize today’s actions and investments, so that future generations of our world might benefit from the visionary decisions of modern day architects of our energy future. Today, Jim’s many friends and former colleagues gather in a virtual cathedral to celebrate his life and the legacy he left us.