

Robeson, Edward John, Jr. ^[1]

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by Brenda Marks Eagles, 1994

9 Aug. 1890–10 Mar. 1966

Edward John Robeson, Jr., civil engineer, shipyard executive, and congressman, was born in [Waynesville](#) ^[2] to Edward John and Sarah Frances Ferguson Robeson. The family moved to Wythe County, Va., soon after his birth and to Cartersville, Ga., in 1891. Young Robeson attended the public schools of Quitman, Marietta, and Sparta, Ga., and was graduated from the [University of Georgia](#) ^[3] at Athens in 1910. From 1910 to 1915 he was employed as a civil engineer successively for the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, the Sibley Land Company in Bay Minetta, Ala., and the Newport Mining Company in Ironwood, Mich.

In 1915 Robeson moved to Newport News, Va., to begin work for the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company. During his long career with the company he served variously as civil engineer, employment manager, personnel superintendent, personnel manager, and vice-president. He also was director and vice-president of Citizens Marine Jefferson Bank and chairman of the board of managers of Riverside Hospital, both in Newport News. In addition, he was a director of the [National Association of Manufacturers](#) ^[4] (1948–59), president of the [Virginia Manufacturers Association](#) ^[5] (1949–50), and president of the [Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers](#) ^[6] (one term).

Robeson retired as vice-president and personnel manager of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company on 30 Apr. 1950 in order to enter politics as a Democrat. He ran in the special election of May 1950 for the First District Virginia congressional seat vacated on the death of Schuyler Otis Bland. Robeson won the election and was reelected for four additional terms but failed to secure the nomination in 1958. While in the House Robeson was a member of the Merchant Marine Committee, Post Office Committee, and Civil Service Committee.

Robeson married Ruth Richards on 15 Aug. 1916, and they were the parents of three daughters, Mrs. J. Weaver Kirkpatrick, Mrs. Robert L. Amsler, and Martha Richards, and a son, Edward J. III. After Mrs. Robeson's death early in 1964, Robeson sold his Virginia estate in June and returned to his native Waynesville. He married Kathryn Danforth in July 1965.

After suffering a heart attack in January 1966 while visiting a daughter in Pascagoula, Miss., he was hospitalized there for several months before his death. He was buried in Greenhill Cemetery, Waynesville. Robeson had been a member of the Methodist church.

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