Chuck Peddle

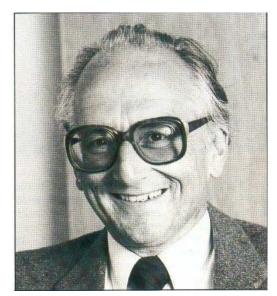## The computer pioneer who invented the 6502 microprocessor and the first personal computer

Chuck Peddle designed and developed the Personal Computer. The machine should be immediately operational after plugging it in. The result was the PET. Nearly the same time the Apple II appeared. The PET was characterized through: build in monitor, integrated cassette device and the well-known BASIC interpreter by Microsoft. The PET had many revisions to endured and is still popular. In particular, it was converted up to have an adequate and thus understandable typewriter keyboard.

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He is a whole generation older than the wonder children of computer engineers, Stephen Wozniak and Steve Jobs. In 1973 Chuck Peddle went to Motorola, and there he was, among other things, involved in the development of the 6502 microprocessor.

The 6800, one of the first microprocessors on the market, was priced US$200 and therefore quite expensive. Chuck Peddle was of the opinion that this price would prevent a broad market launch, and left Motorola. He started at MOS Technology all over again.

What he developed in this small enterprise should become the most successful microprocessor of the first decade of micro computing - the 6502 MPU. Nobody could even imagine that this was the fundament of a whole industry which started a social revolution of enormous scale.

One who acknowledged the widespread effect of microprocessors and especially of the 6502 by MOS Technology was Jack Tramiel, Ex-President of Commodore. Commodore's profits until then had been quite low, selling office products and several calculators.

It is not difficult to understand that Tramiel, main customer of 4-function-chips for calculators produced by MOS Technology, bought this firm in a time when Commodore itself was struggling to make ends meet. Chuck Peddle was, beside the 6502, of the greatest importance for Tramiel.

Chuck Peddle sure did impress with his concept of a personal computer, too. Similar ideas were being put into practice, independent of Peddle's idea, by the founders of Apple, Wozniak and Jobs.

Chuck Peddle was so concerned about his idea that he got together with Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft and father of the famous BASIC Interpreter, to buy Apple. This happened almost synchronously with Commodore buying MOS Technology. Wozniak and Jobs wanted 150.000 Dollar for Apple, but Peddle and Gates could only come up with 2/3rds of this.

So Chuck Peddle stayed with Commodore and in 1977 took over the development of the PET (Personal Electronic Transactor). At that time, Wozniak and Jobs built the Apple II.

The PET was different from this computer by having build-in monitor, integrated cassette device and a keyboard which was more from a calculator to it than from a typewriter. Nevertheless Commodore managed to sell 1000 PET's at US$1500 each very quickly (ed. Inaccurate – they sold for US$795). With this the first generation of microcomputer were born, which had been developed especially for private use at home.

Three years later Chuck Peddle developed a new talent - he became the boss of a new enterprise. Together with Chris Fish, a former finance specialist at Commodore, he founded Sirius Systems Technology, a daughter of Walter Kidde Corporation.

The development of Personal Computers was focusing on 16 bit chips like the 8088 by Intel at that time. Also IBM was feverishly making the Personal Computer happen.

But Sirius managed to launch the Sirius 1 a few weeks earlier than IBM. The Sirius 1 was the first affordable Microcomputer of the 16-bit generation which had been produced in large numbers and which had been noticed worldwide.

The operation was nice and simple with its free movable keyboard and its high-resolution monitor for graphics with flicker-free screen. The Sirius 1 set a standard for micro computer business systems which had been unknown until then.