

Roy Clay Sr., Developer of Hewlett Packard's First Minicomputer



Roy Clay Sr., nicknamed the “Godfather of Silicon Valley,” has had a distinguished career as a computer programmer and scientist. Beginning his coding journey with Fortran during the civil rights era, Mr. Clay’s work drew the attention of engineer and entrepreneur, David Packard who wanted to hire someone to lead a new computer division at Hewlett Packard (HP). After two days of interviews, Mr. Clay launched his career at HP, setting up its computer development business. In 1966, Mr. Clay was a lead developer of the HP 2116A computer, which was the size of a typewriter and only the second 16-bit computer created. While at HP, Mr. Clay, Sr. expanded HP’s recruitment program hiring engineers from Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Following his success at HP, Clay formed *Rod-L Electronics* in 1977 that manufactured electrical-safety test equipment. Rod-L implemented and employed a workforce that fully embraced diversity, equity, and inclusion. The company was recognized by many as Silicon Valley’s first tech start-up, setting a precedent for the region’s innovative spirit.

In 2003, Mr. Clay, Sr. was inducted into the Silicon Valley Engineering Council’s Hall of Fame.