

Charles Plank Encyclopedia Article

Charles Plank

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1915-1989

American chemical engineer who, with Edward Rosinski, developed the first zeolite catalytic cracking system for petroleum refining. In catalytic cracking, materials called catalysts are used to speed up chemical reactions, helping to produce gasoline, fuel oil, and other petroleum products made from crude oil. More efficient and less dangerous than traditional methods of fractional distillation, this process marked a major step forward for the petrochemical industry.