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## A Tribute to Frederick Seitz

At the end of this month Frederick Seitz will conclude seven vigorous years as President of the National Academy of Sciences. He assumed that office at a moment when the Academy was deeply engaged in a searching review of its own role in national affairs. In the aftermath of World War II the prestige of science in the public mind had continued to mount, and there was a widening recognition that henceforth science must become an important element in the shaping of national policy. By its charter and traditions, the National Academy was constituted to provide advice to government on scientific matters as well as to honor individual achievement. Now, however, in what was clearly to be a new era for the influence of science, how was the Academy to fulfill its functions and meet its responsibilities?

In 1962 the membership of the Academy was by no means unanimous on the issues of activism and relevance—on how and how far it should move into the public arena. But the overwhelming majority gave to the new president a mandate not only to continue but to extend the active role in national affairs so effectively initiated by his predecessor, Detlev Bronk.

Dr. Seitz brought to this task the breadth of view and experience that were imperative—a most distinguished career of research in solid state physics and an intimate knowledge of industry as well as academic institutions. He had acquired during the war years an understanding of the character and needs of military research. And as Science Advisor to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, he had developed his own perspective of international science.

Over the past 7 years the Academy has substantially expanded its advisory services to government. Acting through an exceedingly able Committee on Science and Public Policy, it has sponsored studies on the current status and future needs in a number of fields. It has prepared special reports to the Congress on the relation of basic research to national goals and of applied science to technological progress. Through the National Research Council the Academy has directed attention to problems of pollution, water management, drugs, nutrition, transportation, and urban development. At the same time there has been a notable increase of activity in international scientific affairs. The Soviet-U.S. exchange has been extended and new programs established with Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Poland. There is participation in a growing number of worldwide scientific programs, including the International Hydrological Decade, the International Biological Program, the World Weather Watch, and the Global Atmospheric Research Program.

Again, in harmony with the central theme of service to the nation, the NAS collaborated with the engineering community to establish under the same charter the National Academy of Engineering so that the highest resources of that profession might be added to the attack upon the great technological problems that confront society.

Together with Joseph Henry, George Hale, and Detlev Bronk, Seitz has been a builder. During his presidency the endowment has been doubled, and with the handsome new auditorium now taking form, the house of the Academy will at last be completed.

These are only highlights of a record of achievement to which many have contributed but to which Fred Seitz gave outstanding leadership. As the first full-time president, he dedicated all his energies to the task and carried out his responsibilities with courage and wisdom. With the recent changing attitude of the Congress and the country toward science, the need for an independent voice becomes ever more important. We owe Fred Seitz our best thanks for adding to the stature and the usefulness of the National Academy of Sciences in these difficult times.

—J. A. STRATTON, *Chairman of the Board, Ford Foundation*

# Science

## A Tribute to Frederick Seitz

J. A. Stratton

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