OBITUARIES

Georg von Hevesy

The winner of the Nobel Prize in chemistry for 1943, Georg von Hevesy, died on 5 July in Freiburg, West Germany, at the age of 80. He won the prize for his pioneer work in the use of radioactive tracers.

Von Hevesy was born in Budapest and attended the Universities of Budapest and Freiburg. He worked with Fritz Haber for a time, and then



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VON HEVESY

took a fellowship to study at Manchester with Ernest Rutherford. After 1912, he served on the faculties at Budapest, Copenhagen and Freiburg. Although he is best remembered for his work with radioactive isotopes, von Hevesy's first contribution to science was in the declining field of "new elements." By 1923, the year he isolated number 72, the periodic table was firmly based on a theoretical and experimental structure provided by Niels Bohr and the x-ray studies of Henry Moseley. Bohr suggested that the "hole" in the table might be filled by investigating the ores containing zirconium, just above 72 in the periodic table. Von Hevesy and a colleague found hafnium in January of 1923, and its uniqueness was quickly verified by using Moseley's x-ray analysis techniques. In the same year, he performed his first application of radioactive tracers, which involved treating plants with an isotope of lead and then observing the subsequent absorption and distribution. The work caused no great stir at the time; more than 20 years and World War II passed before its immense importance to the life and other sciences was fully recognized. His Nobel Prize came while he was living as a refugee professor at the University of Stockholm. He was awarded the Atoms for Peace Prize in 1959.

Robert Methven Petrie

The director of Canada's Dominion Astrophysical Observatory, Robert Petrie, died on 8 April, shortly before his 60th birthday. He had been associated with the observatory for more than 40 years.

Petrie came to Victoria, B.C., from St Andrews, Scotland, as a young boy. After undergraduate studies at the University of British Columbia, he went to the University of Michigan, where he received his doctorate in 1932. He served as an instructor in astronomy at Michigan until 1935 and then returned to Victoria to become astronomer at the Dominion Observatory. In 1951 he was appointed director of the observatory. While still a high school student, Petrie was encouraged by John Plaskett to help with the work at the still-young observatory, and like Plaskett, his work came to center around determination of the radial velocities of stars for the study of stellar motions. His early research papers show an interest in instrumentation and he pioneered the development of advanced equipment at Victoria. Much of his work involved the spectrophotometry of B stars, and one 25-year program at the observatory shows that their average radial velocities at various galactic longitudes are in good agreement with Jan Oort's theory of galactic rotation.

Petrie was a member of the American Astronomical Society and the Royal Astronomical Society of Cana-

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GENERAL DYNAMICS

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da, and a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and the Royal Astronomical Society.

Louise Sherwood McDowell

A former chairman of the physics department at Wellesley College, Louise McDowell, died on 6 July at her home in Wellesley. She had served continuously on the Wellesley faculty from 1909 until her retirement in 1945.

Miss McDowell was born in 1876 in Wayne, New York. She received her BA from Wellesley in 1898 and over the next several years obtained an MA and a PhD from Cornell University while working intermittently as a secondary-school teacher. Four years after her return to Wellesley, she was appointed professor of physics and chairman of the department. She retired in 1945 as professor emeritus. A fellow of the American Physical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, she was also a member of the Optical Society of America and served as vice president (1944) of the American Association of Physics Teachers.

Francis Michael Wiener

Bolt, Beranek and Newman's principal scientist and manager of its psychoacoustics group, Francis Wiener, died on 22 March. He was 55 years old.

Born in Prague and a graduate of its Technical University, Wiener came to the United States in the 1930's. He held Eveleth and McKay scholarships at Harvard University between 1939 and 1941, the year he was awarded his doctorate, and worked in the University's electro-acoustic and psychoacoustic laboratories until 1946. For the next six years he did research in speech, hearing and applied acoustics at Bell Telephone Laboratories and after 1948 also taught at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. In 1952, he was appointed head of the engineering section at Spencer-Kennedy Laboratories in Cambridge, Mass. He joined Bolt, Beranek and Newman in 1954.

Wiener was a fellow of the Acoustical Society of America and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

