

H. William Koch and AIP

After 20 years of distinguished service, Bill Koch retired as executive director of the American Institute of Physics at the end of March. This occasion provides us with the opportunity to look at the past and future of AIP and to assess the role that Bill Koch played in its growth.

Most physicists are mildly uncertain about AIP and often confuse it with APS, The American Physical Society. The distinction is clear and unambiguous. APS is the largest professional society of physicists; its members are individual physicists. AIP's members are ten societies (listed on page 4 of this issue)—individuals are members of AIP through their membership in the member societies.

AIP plays a number of important roles. It provides many services for the member societies, from publishing journals to collecting dues. It publishes books and its own journals, for instance *PHYSICS TODAY* and the *Journal of Chemical Physics*, and it executes many educational functions. Without AIP the member societies would have a much more difficult task and many educational functions would not be carried out.

In the past 20 years, AIP has grown considerably; the number of member societies has gone from seven to ten, the number and page counts of journals and the number of books have increased dramatically, and the educational mission of AIP has become more visible and important. This growth has all taken place under the leadership of Bill Koch.

Bill Koch began his career as a nuclear physicist at the University of Illinois, did his research at the National Bureau of Standards in Washington, and moved to AIP as executive director in 1967. Because AIP is dedicated to the advancement and diffusion of the knowledge of physics, it is crucial that AIP be guided and directed by a physicist. Bill Koch performed that leadership role with undiminished enthusiasm for his entire tenure. He never lost contact with the physics community and he continuously strove to expand the services and impact of AIP.

The future will most likely bring challenges

to which physics and the physics community must respond. Providing a connection among all segments of the community, enabling timely and efficient transfer of information through old and new modes of publishing, and increasing science education at all levels are among the ways in which AIP will meet the challenges and contribute solutions. The innovations already introduced by Bill Koch and his colleagues form a solid foundation on which to build.

As Bill Koch retires—or more correctly moves on to new challenges—AIP is ready to continue its growth, to act as a unifying center for the many societies that are concerned with physics, and to expand its educational activities. AIP is one of the main pillars on which physics in the US is built. As former and present chairmen of its Governing Board, we thank Bill for his leadership, his devotion to AIP and his untiring efforts.

We join with his many admirers in wishing him well. We also hope and expect that AIP will continue to serve the physics community and the country and that it will continue to grow and change so as to best perform its functions.

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