

MERZBACHER ELECTED VICE PRESIDENT, JACKSON, PATEL AND PERL COUNCILORS

Eugen Merzbacher, Kenan Professor of Physics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, will be APS vice president this year. In accordance with APS bylaws, Merzbacher will be president-elect in 1989, and president in 1990. Val Fitch will continue as president of APS for a second year in 1988, due to the death of president-elect George Vineyard. James A. Krumhansl of Cornell University is president-elect this year.

G. King Walters of Rice University was elected chairman of the nominating committee. Shirley A. Jackson of AT&T Bell Labs, Kumar Patel of Bell Labs, and Martin L. Perl of Stanford Linear Accelerator Center are the new councilors-at-large. All assumed their new positions on 1 January.

Born in Berlin in 1921, Merzbacher received an undergraduate degree in physics and mathematics at the University of Istanbul and taught high school in Ankara. In 1947 he came to the United States and did graduate work at Harvard University, where he received his PhD in 1950. Following stints at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton and at Duke University, Merzbacher joined the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1952. He was chairman of the department of physics and astronomy in 1965-66, and again in 1977-82; he has been Kenan Professor of Physics at UNC since 1969. Merzbacher contributed to revamping the undergraduate curriculum at UNC, and in 1972 the faculty presented him with the Thomas Jefferson Award for distinguished service by a faculty member.

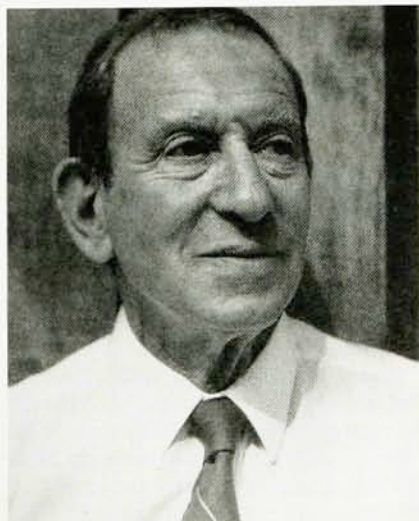
Merzbacher's research in theoretical physics has dealt primarily with general problems of quantum mechanics and with collision theory, particularly at the interface between nuclear and atomic physics. As a UNC faculty member, he has been affiliated with the Triangle Universities Nuclear Laboratory since its establishment in the 1960s. He also has

taken research leaves at the Niels Bohr Institute as an NSF Fellow, at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and at the Universities of Wisconsin, Colorado, Washington, Frankfurt, Stirling (Scotland) and Edinburgh.

Merzbacher has served APS in a great many capacities. As a result of his terms on the publications committee and on the editorial board of *Physical Review A*, he is particularly concerned about the problems caused by the tremendous growth of APS journals, and he wonders about the consequences of such rapid expansion. Basically, growth of the journals has outstripped the growth of APS, he observes, and immediate and long-term problems arise from sometimes conflicting obligations to authors and to readers. At the same time, he says that the journals are "in good shape and in excellent hands. The editorial and production staffs are fine, and the problems of the journals are problems of success."

Merzbacher was a member of the APS Panel on Public Affairs when the directed-energy weapons study was initiated. He feels that via such studies APS should continue to make its valuable and unique contribution

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to the assessment of scientific and technological issues that have an impact on society. He stresses the importance of keeping standards for such studies high and their frequency low, as it is now, so as not to dilute the impact and influence of future reports.

Another priority for Merzbacher and other officers is physics education. Merzbacher says that "physicists in industry, government and academic institutions must seek to convey their knowledge and love of physics to a larger audience, and must join with other scientific societies in the campaign to get more science into the schools, since a scientifically enlightened citizenry is a prerequisite for coping with the challenges that lie ahead." Reaching children in the primary grades is essential, he believes, especially if the representation of minorities and women in the sciences is to be improved.

Merzbacher looks forward to becoming more involved in international affairs of science. He thinks that APS officers should concern themselves with "the balance between 'little' and 'big' science." And he believes they must be "vigilant in protecting the integrity of the peer review system, freedom of scientific inquiry, unfettered communication of research, and unrestricted interactions with...colleagues in other countries."

Walters, the chair-elect of the nominating committee, received his BA in 1953 in physics from Rice University, where he is at present a professor of physics. He received his PhD from Duke in 1956. He spent a postdoctoral year there, then joined the technical staff of Texas Instruments. In 1963 he returned to Rice University as a professor of physics. He was chairman of the physics department at Rice from 1973 to 1977, and has just completed a seven-year term as dean of natural sciences.

Walters's research interests have