

to Defense Secretary William Cohen (and to his predecessor, William Perry), returned to the academic position she left in June 1993—that of professor of computer science and department chair at the University of Virginia.

Jones earned a PhD in computer science at Carnegie Mellon University in 1973. She announced her return to the University of Virginia just as her husband, **William Wulf**, also a professor of computer science at the same

university became president of the National Academy of Engineering (NAE). He had served nine months as interim president after Harold Liebowitz was voted out of office by NAE members.

IRWIN GOODWIN ■

WASHINGTON DISPATCHES

► **Debunking a Gender Gap** After an exhaustive four-year study of standardized exams taken by 15 million US students in the fourth, eighth and twelfth grades, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) of Princeton, New Jersey, concluded that “the average performance differences [between boys and girls] across all subjects is essentially zero.” The findings, released on 6 May, contradict the hoary assumption about gender differences in academic achievement. In comparing test results over the past 30 years, ETS found that although boys continue to get the highest scores on college entrance exams, such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test, the sexes are evenly matched in most critical skills, including verbal reasoning, abstract reasoning and math computation.

The tests indicated that girls had a modest edge in short-term memory and perceptual speed and a somewhat larger advantage in language ability, especially writing. The superiority of girls in verbal skills held up for the 30 years over which the comparisons were made and shows no sign of lessening. By contrast, the higher ranking of boys in math and science was found to be surprisingly slight—indeed, “significantly smaller than 30 years ago,” the report states. In fact, the only subjects in which boys showed a clear advantage were mechanical and electronic ability and knowledge of fields such as economics and history.

► **What Bush Wrought** On the eve of the 52nd anniversary of V-E Day, H. Guyford Stever, this year’s recipient of the National Science Board’s Vannevar Bush Award, extolled Bush for enlisting US scientists to help win World War II by developing radar, missiles and nuclear bombs. Bush “is celebrated for four little words, *Science—The Endless Frontier*,” said Stever. “He should be better known as a national hero.” Bush’s legacy, he declared, is the country’s continuing leadership in academic and industrial research. In 1941, Bush plucked Stever, who had just received his PhD in physics from Caltech and was working as a postdoc at MIT’s Radiation Laboratory, to work in Washington at the Office of Scientific Research and Development. When the US entered the war, Bush shipped Stever off to London, where as a science liaison officer, he analyzed developments in British radar and German rocketry.

After the war, Stever became an aeronautical engineer and helped pioneer the technologies of supersonic aircraft and guided missiles. He chaired the special committee on space exploration convened by the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics that provided the first guidelines for establishing NASA and the country’s civilian space program. In 1968, Stever led the effort to merge the Carnegie Institute of Technology with the Mellon Institute, to form Carnegie Mellon University. Then, as director of the National Science Foundation, he became the science adviser to Presidents Nixon and Ford. But he never lost contact with the physicist-engineer who “discovered” him, Vannevar Bush. In praising him, Stever also made sure that the 150 science board dinner guests learned how Bush pronounced his odd first name—van-EE-ver.

Also honored at the dinner was the late Carl Sagan, the Cornell University astrophysicist, who received a posthu-

mous NSF Director’s Public Service Award (accepted by his widow, Ann Druyan), and Eric A. Cornell, adjunct professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder and physicist at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, accepted the prestigious Alan T. Waterman Prize for young researchers. Cornell and University of Colorado physicist Carl Wieman, first demonstrated Bose-Einstein condensation in a gas (PHYSICS TODAY, August 1995, page 17). The Waterman Prize gives Cornell \$500 000 over the next three years.

► **Off the Internet** The huge commercial success of the Internet has led the National Science Foundation to end its cooperative agreement with Network Solutions Inc of Vienna, Virginia, which assigns and administers Internet names and addresses. NSF funded much of the R&D to create the Internet, but, says Joseph Bordogna, NSF’s acting deputy director, “The Internet has gone from the development stage to the application stage, and its administrative structure needs to be supported by its commercial customers.” NSF is now turning its attention to the next-generation Internet, which is the subject of the Administration’s fiscal 1998 budget request of \$100 million, to be shared among five agencies. But the Republican-led House Science Committee has refused to authorize the funds for the proposed project, arguing that the Internet is now a profitable symbol of high technology and global communication and therefore doesn’t need government support.

Without involving the Internet, NSF has augmented its own “backbone” network service with “The Chicago STAR TAP” (Science, Technology and Research Transit Point), which provides an interconnection point for US and Canadian scientists who collaborate on research and education projects requiring large databases. The operation of this interconnection is shared by the University of Illinois at Chicago, the National Center for Supercomputer Applications at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, Argonne National Laboratory and Ameritech Corp.

► **EMF Research Plugged Back In** Often it’s the inconsequential that attracts most support on Capitol Hill. A case in point: On 29 April, the House passed HR 363 by a lopsided 387-to-35 vote, thereby extending Department of Energy research on the health risks of electromagnetic fields (EMFs) associated with power lines and household appliances. The bill, which sparked statements on the House floor by seven members in favor and no opposition, had been approved a few days before by the Science and Commerce committees. The bill directs DOE to continue the Research and Public Information Dissemination Program (RAPID) for an extra year. After the National Academy of Sciences’s National Research Council had found “no conclusive and consistent” evidence of health disorders from EMFs in homes, DOE wanted to pull the plug on RAPID at the end of fiscal 1997, on 30 September (see PHYSICS TODAY, May, page 47). The additional year is expected to cost about \$4.5 million. In fact, the program, originally projected to cost \$65 million over five years, will be authorized under the bill for \$45 million, but its sponsors don’t believe all that money will be spent.

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