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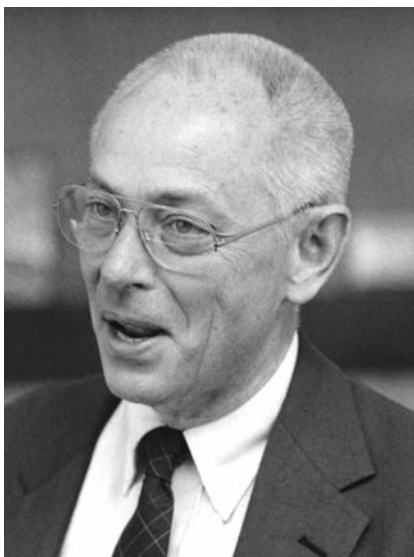
### Jarus William Quinn

Jarus William Quinn, the retired executive director of the Optical Society of America (OSA), died of a heart attack on 11 August 2012 in Durham, North Carolina. During his tenure from 1969 until 1994, OSA grew substantially in membership, meeting attendance, papers published, revenue, and staff. There were two principal reasons: the laser and Jarus; one made it possible, the other made it happen.

Jarus was born on 25 August 1930 in West Grove, Pennsylvania. In 1952 he received a BS in physics from Saint Joseph's University; he was a graduate student at the Johns Hopkins University for the next three years. He obtained a doctorate from the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, in 1964 with a thesis entitled "Vibrational relaxation in HCl," carried out under the supervision of Shirleigh Silverman. Jarus was an assistant professor at Catholic University until 1969. In 1971 he, Silverman, James Dowling, and William Benedict published a paper on the pressure dependence of the shape of carbon monoxide IR emission lines. That same year he also authored a paper with Donald Michels and Shelby Tilford on the extreme-UV spectrum of triply ionized nitrogen.

In 1959 the OSA board decided to open a permanent office in Washington, DC, to support the society's activities. Mary Warga, a physics professor from the University of Pittsburgh, was appointed executive secretary. When her health began to fail in the late 1960s, Jarus was hired to manage OSA's day-to-day operations. (Because Warga had no family, he eventually also became her guardian.) At the time, the executive office, with seven employees, was responsible for managing two journals—the *Journal of the Optical Society of America (JOSA)* and *Applied Optics (AO)*—two society-wide meetings, and several small topical meetings.

The laser, which was first experimentally realized in 1960, and laser applications were having widespread impact by the end of the decade. Numerous laser-related technical conferences sprang up in the 1960s and



Jarus William Quinn

1970s; OSA cosponsored the International Quantum Electronics Conference, the Conference on Laser Engineering and Applications, and the Conference on Lasers and Electro-Optical Systems. As conference programs grew in both size and quantity—and substantial exhibits with them—Jarus saw an opportunity for OSA. Serving as support manager for the technical programs and then as exhibits manager, Jarus brought stability to the conference-management process. Later the Optical Fiber Conference and other topical meetings were added to the OSA conference-management portfolio.

With the advent of lasers, the tempo of optics publishing picked up. To stay at its forefront, OSA needed to develop a high-impact journal that could compete with other letters publications. With the board's approval, in 1977 Jarus established *Optics Letters*. Robert Terhune was selected as editor, and the journal soon became successful. During the 1980s OSA publishing underwent more changes: *JOSA* was split into two publications, and *AO* started publishing in three subdivisions. In hiring an experienced publishing manager, Jarus professionalized journal operations, moved manuscript management out of the editors' offices, and took the first steps toward electronic publishing.

When Jarus retired in 1994, OSA had

90 staff members and had purchased its own building. He received OSA's Distinguished Service Medal in 1993 and last year became the society's 44th honorary member.

Over the years I watched Jarus's leadership style at many member meetings. He would mostly sit quietly at one corner of the table and usually say little except when asked. Members would have a discussion, often heated and lengthy. When someone made a proposal Jarus agreed with, he would pipe up with a supporting remark or two and often bring the discussion to a successful conclusion. Jarus didn't want to claim the right result but to get the right result.

Getting the membership to work together could be difficult. Some represented the pre-laser old guard, others the laser tyros. Practical technologists and engineers often did not have much in common with those in fundamental research. Interests ranged from laser fusion to vision and from laser spectroscopy to lens design. There were always prima donnas and big egos to deal with. Jarus tried to understand the desires and worries of every constituency and to deal with everyone fairly. His approach worked well, although it was impossible to satisfy all.

Former and current OSA staff members remember Jarus fondly. Many have gone on to become leaders in management of professional societies, including OSA and the American Physical Society. He was always supportive of the staffers' aspirations and needs. In a blog post, former staffer Susan Cato wrote,

He was kind and compassionate. Jarus cared obsessively about every person at OSA. He made it his business to know who we were, and about our families, our careers, and sometimes even our struggles. Often he would offer some sort of assistance if need be. Regularly, he would visit staff in their cubicles and plop himself down in the chair and have a conversation about life or family—and he would remember every detail from the last visit.

**Paul L. Kelley**  
Optical Society  
Washington, DC ■

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