



George Placzek

George Placzek, permanent member of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N. J., died unexpectedly last October at the age of fifty in Zürich, Switzerland. Born in Brunn, Czechoslovakia, he studied at Vienna and later in the early thirties in Holland, France, Denmark, Italy, Germany, Israel, and Russia. During this period he mastered the languages and assimilated the best of the culture of the countries in which he resided and struck friendships which lasted deep and close for life. His scientific work was mainly in the field of molecular physics and of neutron diffusion. It was characterized by a deep and thorough understanding of complicated phenomena. He simplified whenever he could, but never at the expense of completeness. His work on the Raman effect is a classic and dominates the field. The European turmoil of the thirties brought him to the United States and during the war he worked at the Canadian atomic project and later at Los Alamos. After the war he spent some time at the General Electric Company, but he found his last task at the Institute for Advanced Study. Unfortunately his health became poor during the war and his last years were marred by physical disabilities endured with smiling stoicism. His published scientific work, although it does not reflect adequately his real contribution, is a permanent record of the scientist. It is hardly possible to give an adequate picture of the man. I believe that his friends felt clearly his human greatness. Certainly he had an unerring judgment of human affairs, tempered by benevolence, and fortified by vast experience.

The loss to science is great, the personal loss to his friends irreparable.

Emilio Segrè
Berkeley, California

Fred Terry Rogers, Jr., head of the physics department at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, S. C., died on February 22nd, following a heart attack. Born 41 years ago in Henderson, Kentucky, he spent his youth in Texas where his father was a physician. He was an honor student at Rice Institute, receiving his doctorate in physics there in 1939. At the outbreak of World War II, after having taught at the Universities of North Carolina and Houston, he joined the US Naval Ordnance Plant at Indianapolis as head of the physics section. Dr. Rogers returned to the University of North Carolina for a two-year period as associate professor of physics, and later spent six months with the AEC at Oak Ridge. In 1949 he went to China Lake, California, where he headed the physics research division of the US Naval Ordnance Test Station. In 1953 he accepted the chairmanship of the physics department at the University of South Carolina. Dr. Rogers was active in a number of scientific and professional organizations, including the American Physical Society, of which he was a fellow. He is survived by his wife, Dr. Marguerite M. Rogers, head of the science division at Columbia College, who is also a physicist, and by four young sons and one small daughter.

Harvey L. Curtis, former chief of the Inductance and Capacitance Section in the Electricity Division of the National Bureau of Standards, died on April 17th in Washington, D. C. He was eighty years old. A native of Mason, Michigan, he received his PhD in physics in 1910 from the University of Michigan. Dr. Curtis joined the Bureau in 1907 as an assistant physicist. During the following two decades he was advanced through the various grades to the position of principal physicist. He served as chief of the Inductance and Capacitance Section from 1915 until his retirement in 1946. He worked on the measurement of current and resistance, dielectrics, and (during the two World Wars) did ballistics research for the Navy. He continued to be active with the Bureau after his retirement. A fellow of the American Physical Society, Dr. Curtis served as president of the Philosophical Society of Washington in 1931 and of the Washington Academy of Science in 1942. From 1928 to 1942 he served as a member of the committee on insulation and of the subcommittee on physics of the National Research Council.

Irene Joliot-Curie, former French atomic energy commissioner and director of the Radium Institute in Paris, died in that city on March 17th at the age of 58. The daughter of the late Pierre and Marie Curie and a physicist of renown in her own right, Mme. Joliot-Curie shared the 1935 Nobel chemistry award with her husband, Frédéric, for their discovery of artificially induced radiation. The cause of her death has been attributed to leukemia contracted after prolonged work with radioactive materials. She was a member of the American Physical Society.