

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY
DEDICATORY NUMBER IN HONOR OF
WILLIAM ALBERT NOYES, JR.

For the past thirteen years W. Albert Noyes, Jr., has devotedly and successfully edited the *Journal of the American Chemical Society*. To the deep regret of the many readers of this Journal he is now retiring from this editorship. These readers are grateful for his guidance which maintained and improved the quality of the Journal during a difficult period of exponential growth of scientific publication. The contributors will be grateful for the sympathy and fairness with which he considered each paper submitted. Friends, readers and contributors will be pleased to know that Professor Noyes is not completely terminating his career as editor of American Chemical Society journals. This career began with his editorship of *Chemical Reviews* 1939-49, where his work was so outstanding that he was the natural choice to head the *Journal of the American Chemical Society* upon the retirement of the previous editor, Arthur Becket Lamb, in 1950. Again in 1952 when the Society took over the publication of the *Journal of Physical Chemistry* it was almost inevitable that Professor Noyes should be asked to edit the new acquisition to ensure the same high standards as in other Society publications. Fortunately, he will continue to edit the *Journal of Physical Chemistry*.

A second career of Professor Noyes and the one that is central to his other professional activities is that of teacher and research chemist. His preparation for this career probably dates from his birth in Terre Haute, Indiana in 1898, since his father was the eminent organic chemist for whom is named the William Albert Noyes Chemistry Laboratory at the University of Illinois. Possibly the son's poise before distinguished audiences was acquired serving as butler when his father entertained distinguished foreign scientists. W. A. Noyes, Jr., studied at Grinnell and the University of Illinois. From the latter school in 1917 he enlisted in the Signal Corps, which was calling for experienced radio operators. Professor Noyes' experience had been acquired by working during the summer as radio operator on freighters. He served at the front and from 1917 to 1919 passed through the ranks of Private, Corporal, Sergeant to Second Lieutenant. His A.B. was granted in 1919 by Grinnell. Mustered out in France he attended the

University of Paris where in 1920 he obtained a D.-ès-Sc. and, happily, a beautifully brilliant crimson gown to enliven the dull black of American academic processions. More importantly he acquired a bride, Sabine Onnilon, whom he married in 1921. Her simple informality and Gallic charm have led each generation of graduate students to an enthusiastic approval of this choice. The Noyes have one son Claude who has specialized in political science. After a brief stay at the University of Geneva in Switzerland Professor Noyes went to the University of California as a teaching fellow, because, characteristically, he felt the war had telescoped his schooling and he wanted to deepen his fundamental knowledge at a school of chemistry headed by such a man as G. N. Lewis.

The academic career of Albert Noyes may be summarized as follows: Instructor, University of California, 1920-21; Instructor then Assistant professor, University of Chicago, 1922-29; Associate professor and Professor, Brown University, 1929-38. From this latter position he was finally persuaded to go to the University of Rochester to build up the chemistry department to one of national stature, a labor of love in which he and his colleagues have admirably succeeded. At Rochester he was Professor, physical chemistry, 1938-40; Chairman, Chemistry Department, 1939-55; Charles Frederick Houghton Professor of Chemistry, 1940-60; Distinguished Senior Professor of Chemistry, 1960- ; and, alas for the time lost to science, Dean of Graduate School, 1952-56; acting Dean of College of Arts and Science, 1956-58. However, this is but the background in time and space for the real achievements of Professor Noyes academic career. Such an achievement is found in the many undergraduate chemistry courses that he presented with inspiring clarity, because he loved and valued the work; for Professor Noyes is that phenomenon, less common than one could hope, an inspiring teacher and inspired researcher. A second achievement is the more than fifty graduate students (and 20 post-doctoral students), who recall with pleasure the too short years spent with "Doc" Noyes learning the techniques and scientific knowledge for good research, but, more vitally, learning a love of science and an unequivocal

intellectual honesty in dealing with experimental "facts." A third achievement is found in his publications. The 60 papers, largely on the photochemistry of ketones, have contributed greatly to our knowledge of chemical kinetics. Because of this work we have a more detailed knowledge of the paths of energy dissipation for excited ketone molecules than for any other polyatomic system; free radical or molecular dissociation, fluorescence, phosphorescence of triplet states, deactivation—all have been carefully investigated. Professor Noyes is also the author of several books, particularly "Photochemistry of Gases" with P. A. Leighton which appeared in 1941 as the United States entered World War II. The untimely publication date led the publisher to limit the number of copies produced. However, if reports are true, we can be grateful to Russian perspicacity that new copies of this classic are still available—in Russian.*

A third career of Professor Noyes has been that of public servant: to education; to science; to the nation; and to mankind. For the American Chemical Society he has been chairman of the Committee on Professional Training of Chemists, a group conceived to investigate and assure the quality of chemical education in American colleges and universities. He served the Society as President in 1947. During World War II he again served his country well, this time with his scientific knowledge and with the confidence he inspired in both scientists and officers. As Section Chairman of the National Defense Research Committee 1940-42 and Division Chairman 1942-46, he was indefatigable and invaluable in the solution of problems connected with war gas research and the development of protection against such gases. Our thorough preparation may have had something to do with the fact that gas was not used against the Allies. Considerable travel was involved in this period and one lingering effect may be the soporific qualities which Professor Noyes still finds in the railway sleeping car. Since the war Professor Noyes has continued to serve on various scientific advisory committees for the Department of Defense. More recently with the increasing importance of space research, he naturally was appointed to the House of Representatives Committee on Sciences and Astronautics, and the President's Science Advisory Committee. Possibly he is too well-known in Washington. Whenever someone is wanted whose scientific knowledge is outstanding, whose integrity is unquestioned, and who will have the confidence of all concerned, the IBM machine produces the card for Professor Noyes.

Devoted as has been Professor Noyes' service to his country, his vision is large enough to see the needs of men beyond our borders. A pragmatic

* Since 1960 also available from University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan.

idealist, he has involved himself wholeheartedly in the activities, educational and scientific, of UNESCO. He took part in the London meeting in which plans for the organization were drafted. He has taken part in such activities as a survey of the educational needs of and technical assistance for Africa south of the Sahara, and the Special Mission to the United Arab Republic for Implementation of the Visiting Professor Program. At present he is a member of the U. S. National Commission for UNESCO. He has served international science in other ways, including such roles as Vice President of the International Union of Chemistry 1947-51, Treasurer of the International Council of Scientific Unions 1952-55, and culminating in the Presidency of IUPAC, 1960-63.

Such an outstanding career has naturally garnered well-earned honors. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Sigma Xi and Phi Beta Kappa. Grinnell College in 1945, the University of Rhode Island in 1953, the University of Paris in 1957, Indiana University in 1959, the University of Ottawa in 1960, and the University of Montreal in 1961, have granted him the honorary degree of D.Sc. His scientific work has won for him the ACS Priestley Medal 1954 and the Willard Gibbs Medal of the Chicago Section 1957. His achievements have gained international recognition also, as he is Membre d'Honneur of the Société Chimique de France and an officer of the French Legion of Honor. Perhaps, it is our British friends who have characterized best his work for the common cause when they granted him in 1948 the King's Medal from the British Empire for "*Service in the cause of freedom.*"

Although this incomplete list of achievements is impressive, it is the fourth career of "Doc" Noyes that is most memorable to his friends. The fourth career is that of the man. Perhaps, his success as a man can best be measured in the esteem and affection he has won from his graduate students past and present—an esteem founded on his scientific ability, his envied faculty of memory, his integrity, and his fairness: an affection rooted in his modesty (almost painful to some of his graduate students), the friendly equality of his conception of the student-teacher relationship, his sympathy for humanity individually and en masse, and his intolerance of inhumanity. These same qualities have also been appreciated by those somewhat more influentially placed than the student at the vacuum bench, but if "Doc" Noyes has been partial toward any of his associates and friends it will have been toward his students. To quote a former graduate student, "The world being full of a number of things, I can conceive of a person who would not like "Doc" Noyes, I cannot conceive of one who would not respect him."

MAX S. MATHESON