

News From Senior Physiologists

Letters to Helen M. Tepperman

Donald Scott, Jr. writes, "My career has mainly been in sensory neurophysiology, where I was concerned with the transducer function of sensory terminals in dentin as the best model for the arousal of pain. I was trained by Professor A. V. Hill in London and Professor Herbert Gasser in New York, and spent almost all of my research career in various departments at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School.

"When my basic research grant was terminated at the age of 65, I already had two other areas of great interest to me, outside the field of my career; one of these was in the field of theology, and the other was to study learning problems for high school students living in tribal areas of Zimbabwe. This latter aim has proved much more interesting and rewarding and had led me to make eleven visits to these schools.

". . . [S]ome 40 years ago I undertook to help a very capable young man from Zimbabwe through the undergraduate course at Penn and then the medical course at Edinburgh. From that I have expanded so that there are now four MDs who I have helped, and in the course of this interest I have increasingly been interested in the problems encountered by students from tribal areas who have difficulty understanding such concepts as numbers, electricity, light, etc. In recent years I have experimented with various 'teaching aids' used in the United States which could be made and used in Zimbabwe. I have looked at this problem from the point of the student and their family and, as a result, have been made a member of the greater family associated with the Munyama family. This has been very rewarding,

largely due to the very keen interest and initiate of the rural students."

Michael Barany wrote about his career in muscle research and his busy retirement life. As a Jew, he was denied a college education in Hungary before the second world war and was sent to Buchenwald subsequently. After liberation in 1945, he returned to Hungary, received his MD and PhD degrees, married and began his interest in muscle research. His wife, a physicist, became his collaborator. Together, they conducted research at the Weizmann Institute in Israel, the Max Planck Institute in Heidelberg, and in New York. Barany was head of the Department of Contractile Proteins at the Institute for Muscle Diseases in New York City from 1960 to 1974. Starting in 1974, he and his wife, both professors at the University of Illinois Medical School in Chicago, continued their muscle research, taking advantage of NMR techniques.

"My retirement did not change my scientific activities significantly. I am still working seven days a week and do most of the experiments with my own hands in the laboratory. I am fortunate to have a department head who did not take away my space and all that I have to worry about is finding the funds necessary for my research. I regularly exercise and eat a well-balanced diet to keep fit.

"A retirement automatically involves looking back into the past and forward into the future; soon it will be 50 years since I started research. Three years after that, I married and my wife also became my scientific collaborator. At any place we were working, we rented an apartment nearby. Our two sons were raised virtually in the laboratory and so they were in their early twenties when they received their PhDs. Now they are tenured professors

in biochemistry and molecular biology at prestigious universities. Recently, our grandchildren became visitors of our laboratory. They showed an interest in the use of the balance, autotipettes, starting the centrifuge and freezing objects in dry ice. Thus we are optimistic about the future.

"Science and humanity filled my life along with my family of a devoted wife and two loving sons who have formed the basis of my happiness. If I could do it over, I would follow the same path."

Letter to Robert Grover

Leonard B. Kirschner writes, "Thanks for the letter to the natal class 1923. It reached me shortly before I made my annual summer trek to Copenhagen, hence the tardy reply. In fact, I did retire last May after 40 years on this faculty, and I'm still coming to grips with the new status. The years really tiptoed by unnoticed.

"I don't plan to teach beyond an occasional invited lecture, but the department allowed me to hold my lab space, and I will continue to do research. The pattern during the past 8 years has been to work at home during the academic year and in the August Krogh Institute, Copenhagen during the summer. I hope to continue this program as long as my department and my Danish friends will put up with me.

"'Words of wisdom' for beginners? I was fortunate in encountering Ladd Prosser (Illinois), Bill Stone (Wisconsin), and Hans Ussing (Copenhagen) during my training. They lighted a fire that still hasn't gone out. So my advice is choose mentor(s) who are able to light your fire (i.e., be lucky).