

News of Science

National Merit Scholarship Program

Formation of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, Evanston, Ill., was announced on 6 Sept. by its president, John M. Stalnaker. The corporation is an independent, nonprofit organization whose purpose is to devise and administer a nation-wide system of scholarships for higher education. The Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York have undertaken to finance the activity by providing grants totaling \$2.5 million for its administrative expenses. The Ford Foundation has also appropriated a \$10-million scholarship fund, payable at the rate of \$1 million a year for 10 years, and is prepared to finance additional scholarships up to a total of \$8 million. All secondary schools, public and private, are entitled to participate in the program.

The major underlying purposes of these grants are twofold: to find this country's most talented young people and make a college education available to them regardless of their financial situation; and to make it easy for business enterprises to contribute effectively to the support of higher education. A further purpose is to provide, in one organization, a single program that will reduce wasteful duplication of operation and expense and will, at the same time, protect fully the natural interests and purposes of the donors. The flexibility of the present program provides this protection.

In addition to Stalnaker, the members of the corporation's board of directors are Laird Bell, *chairman*, of Bell, Boyd, Marshall and Lloyd, Chicago; Walker Lee Cisler, president, Detroit Edison Co.; Ward Darley, president, University of Colorado; John S. Dickey, president, Dartmouth College; J. W. Edwards, superintendent of schools, Portland, Ore.; Henry T. Heald, chancellor, New York University; Dexter M. Keezer, vice president, McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., New York; Nancy D. Lewis, dean, Pembroke College; I. Newman, president, Maison Blanche Co., New Orleans, La.; Hollis F. Price, president, LeMoyne College; Sidney J. Weinberg, partner,

Goldman Sachs and Co., New York; and Robert E. Wilson, chairman of the board, Standard Oil Co. (Ind.), Chicago.

All scholarship selections will be made on the basis of merit, but the stipend will be based on need. The minimum stipend will be \$100 a year; the maximum will cover the full cost of attending the institution selected; in every case a "cost of education" grant will be made to the college.

The interest and cooperation of corporations concerned with the higher education of exceptional students is invited. The National Merit Scholarship Corporation has \$8 million with which to match contributions received from corporations or from other donors. These funds, not otherwise available, would serve to double the effectiveness of the donor's contribution. Scholarships financed by these matching funds will be known as National Merit Scholarships. The program provides the following advantages to corporations.

- 1) All the mechanism and operation of a nationwide selective program will be undertaken, carried out, and paid for by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, which will also administer the scholarship throughout its duration at no cost to the donor.

- 2) Donor-identity with all scholarships is completely maintained at all times, each such scholarship bearing the donor designation.

- 3) Donors may specify criteria for their scholars, such as geographic origin or location, career-purpose, type of education desired, identity or regional location of student's first-choice college, sex of students, parents' occupation, and so forth. Participation is limited to American citizens. Because the race and religion of participants will not be considered in making selections, information on these items will not be obtained. The scholarship corporation or the donor will select, from the winners of the competition, students conforming as nearly as possible to the donor's requirements.

- 4) Donors may provide any desired number of scholarships, on a 4-year basis, at the average cost of all scholarships, including grants to institutions.

They may pay either in a lump sum or year by year. Costs will be readjusted at the end of each year.

- 5) It is estimated that the average cost of a 4-year college scholarship is \$6000; as a rule, of this amount \$2500 will be given to the college selected, the tuition will cost an additional \$2500, and \$1000 will be required for other student expenses.

With the announcement of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, both the Sears-Roebuck Foundation and Time, Inc., revealed plans to participate in the program. Sears will provide \$600,000 for the support of 100 4-year scholarships in 1956. Each year thereafter it is expected that Sears will award 100 more Sears Foundation merit scholarships. Time, Inc., has allocated \$30,000 to support five Time-Life scholarships. The Time grant was actually made in 1953 when plans for establishing the scholarship corporation were still in the formative stage.

Beginning this fall, the more than 24,000 secondary schools of the nation will be invited to participate annually in the National Merit Scholarship Program by selecting the outstanding 5 percent of their senior classes as available candidates. All such entrants will be given a screening test; the highest scorers in each state, to the extent of 10 times the number of scholarships available for that state, will be given the scholastic aptitude test of the College Entrance Examination Board. The highest scorers in this test, for each state, to the extent of 5 times the number of scholarships to be awarded, will be requested to supply further information with regard to school records, recommendations, and biographical information. Using all of this background material, the selection of the winners will be made.

To enter a school in the program, the principal *must return the entry form by 14 Oct.* to National Merit Scholarship Program, Educational Testing Service, 20 Nassau St., Princeton, N. J. The preliminary aptitude test is to be given on 26 Oct. The Merit Program, as now financed, is the largest independent scholarship program in the history of American education.

News Briefs

■ Tests of the effect of primary cosmic radiation on animals have been made in connection with Air Research and Development Command research projects that are being conducted in the Space Biology Branch of the Aero-Medical Field Laboratory at Holloman Air Development Center, N.M. Living animals were exposed to cosmic radiation during