Don K. Price, Jr., President-Elect

"He made a unique contribution by his capacity for understanding the ways in which a balanced knowledge and an organized sense of common purpose must guide the use of either money or science in the public service. In a society which too easily becomes wealthy without knowing how to use its wealth for decent ends, and too frequently expands the institutional apparatus of scholarship without increasing wisdom, his talents gave philanthropy a greater discrimination of purpose. His ability to see through the shoddy solutions, to penetrate the phony salesmanship of the glib but irresponsible, and to disregard the arrogant pressures of the powerful and the still more arrogant pretensions of the learned, helped him to add discipline and effectiveness to the hope and good will of the early years of his organization." Thus, in a tribute of rare sensitivity and perception, Don K. Price, Jr., wrote of William W. McPeak, vice president of the Ford Foundation, in 1964. The characterization and the tribute apply remarkedly closely to Price himself.

Price, who comes to the American Association for the Advancement of Science as its new president-elect, has had a rich and immensely varied career, yet one of extraordinary inner coherence. Born in Middlesboro, Kentucky, he received his A.B. degree at Vanderbilt University in 1931, having worked at the same time first as a reporter on, and then as state editor for, the Nashville *Evening Tennesseean*. It is abundantly clear today that this early experience in reporting and newspaper editing gave a special quality to his perceptions and brought a particular dimension to his whole outlook that were to color and enrich all his later work. Upon graduation from Vanderbilt he went on to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, where he earned the B.A. degree in 1934 and the B.Litt. the following year. Returning to Washington in 1935, he entered government service as a research assistant in the Home Owners Loan Corporation and as assistant to the chairman of the Central Housing Committee. In 1936 he married Margaret Helen Gailbreath. His initial sojourn in Washington lasted until 1937. The year after their marriage the Prices moved to New York, where he became a staff member of the Committee on Public Administration of the Social Science Research Council. After 2 years of this experience he joined the staff of the Public Administration Clearing House in Chicago, in 1939. For the first 2 years he served as editorial associate; then he became assistant director; and finally associate director, in which capacity he served from 1946 to 1953. In World War II he was a lieutenant in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve.

Between his terms as assistant and associate director of the Clearing House he became a staff member of the U.S. Bureau of the Budget, precisely at the time when the critical legislation for the National Science Foundation was being shaped and was under keen debate. In the formation of that legislation, and particularly in the evolution of the philosophy which was to set the mold for the character of the Foundation itself, Don Price played an influential part.

In 1947–48 he was assistant to former President Herbert Hoover on a study of the United States Presidency made under the auspices of the Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government. In the Eisenhower administration he served on the President's Advisory Committee on Government Organization.

In his last year as associate director of the Public Administration Clearing House Don Price again worked on the Washington scene—this time in a post which was particularly to enrich his experience and outlook in the area of science and public policy—as deputy chairman of the Research and Development Board of the Department of Defense, under Walter G. Whitman, and as staff director for the Committee on Department of Defense Organization.

In 1949 Price had worked as a member of the staff which, under the chairmanship of H. Rowan Gaither, had conducted the studies that critically shaped the purposes and determined the future structure of the Ford Foundation. In 1953 he took the critical decision to join the Foundation as an associate director, and was soon appointed a vice president. For 5 years he served the Foundation in this capacity. Then, in 1958, he assumed the post, which he has ever since held, of professor of government at Harvard and dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Public Administration, succeeding Edward Mason. In announcing that appointment, President Pusey remarked: "Dean Mason brought the school through a long period of post-war stress and enlargement, during which he helped augment the variety of its programs and the increase of its usefulness to government and to the education of experienced public servants. We expect that Mr. Price in building on Dean Mason's achievement will be able to develop further the study of public policy and administration and advance the training of mature leaders for the higher levels of government." Those remarks have proved prophetic. The Harvard Graduate School of Public Administration, established in 1936, had already built up a formidable tradition of concentration on the larger national issues of policy and administration, and had instituted an extensive series of seminars and conferences to bring representatives of government together with scholars in such fields as law and government, economics, business, and history. The new dean expanded and enriched these activities immensely. But he also added quite a new dimension, and one of the highest significance—the burgeoning dimension of government and science. Among other things, the Seminar in Science and Public Policy which he organized and which he has developed at Harvard over the years has not only become famous in itself but, as a pioneering venture, has served and is serving as a model for other academic and research centers of the nation.

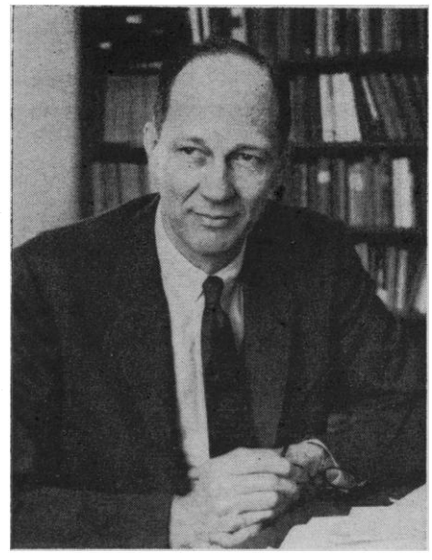
That dimension was not a new one for Don Price. Indeed, the panorama of experience of his career, in its apparent diversity, had in a very real sense provided unique and singularly unified preparation for understanding and expressing, in greater depth than had hitherto been achieved, the unique role that science has come to occupy in the shaping of American national life, and the commanding—and also peculiar—place that it preempts today, and will preempt in the

future. In striving for those insights Price has brought contributions to our understanding of these matters—at once so practically important and so little known to a general public that desperately needs to know and understand them—that, it may be fair to say, are unique in his generation.

Price's concern with the shape of public policy has been essentially lifelong, and his interest in the impact of science and technology on public affairs is also of very long standing. In 1940, with Harold and Kathryn Stone, he published *City Manager Government in the United States*. This was followed in 1952 by *U.S. Foreign Policy, Its Organization and Control*, written in collaboration with William Yandell Elliott and others, and this in turn by *The Political Economy of American Foreign Policy*, in 1955. In 1954, however, the lines of his interest in the specific field which has provided perhaps the most significant and far-reaching of all his investigations were drawn taut in an extraordinarily searching and provocative and significant book. *Government and Science—Their Dynamic Relation in American Democracy* was first presented as the 1953 James Stokes Lectures on Politics at New York University. In its preface there is embodied a credo which, it is clear, was to dominate all of Don Price's research and writing in the field of science and public policy over the following decade.

"The deeper reason [for my undertaking to write this book] was a notion that had been developing in my mind for several years (not a particularly original one) that the development of public policy and of the methods of its administration owed less in the long run to the processes of conflict among political parties and social or economic pressure groups than to the more objective processes of research and discussion among professional groups. . . .

". . . In this series of jobs I began to be aware that the activities of scientists, which had always been unusually influential in the public policies of the United States, were becoming responsible for significant changes in the nature of the American governmental system. The subject seemed to me to cry out for attention and to involve a whole series of most profound and neglected problems. All that this series of essays can do is to ask a few of the questions, and to express the hope that other students can go far more deeply into their history and their theory, while others in the public service can begin to answer them in practice."



Don K. Price, Jr.

In the event, it was Price himself who was to exert an outstanding influence in developing these subjects more deeply in history and theory, as well as more acutely and actively in practice, through a decade when the vision and prophecies of 1954 have been fleshed out to a degree which even those fully sensitive to them, and highly sympathetic with them when they were made, would still hardly have dreamed possible.

In 1958, in an address before the Washington meeting of the AAAS, Don Price wrote: "In the United States, it seems to me, our best hope is for a science which will grow, not as a guild under the patronage of a traditional sovereignty, but as a most important element in a highly diversified and free system. In this system the scientist gets his influence not from a complete detachment from politics but from sharing in the political obligations of society. And in this system, too, politics may get its strength not by meddling with the processes of research, and not by strait-jacketing science in an ideology, but by freeing science to question and improve all aspects of policy, all forms of social organization."

The newest landmark of Don Price's evolving thought in this area of statesmanship is his extraordinarily significant *The Scientific Estate*, published in 1965. In that book there occurs a further passage which so vividly expands the philosophy of the 1958 address, and further deepens and extends it, that I cannot resist the temptation to quote it here, hazardous and unfair though it be to wrench it from its proper context.

"Obviously, the argument runs, scientists should work in a democratic way toward democratic goals and politicians should be guided by the methods of science. It seems to me, on the contrary, that we will do more to protect the freedom of our constitutional system by recognizing how fundamentally *different* politics and science are, and must remain; each is concerned primarily with one of the two complementary aspects of freedom—free will and truth."

This, then, is the man who has become the new president-elect of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He lives in Cambridge. His wife served as technical assistant to the director of the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology, Alfred Sherwood Romer, until Romer's formal retirement from that post about 2 years ago. There is a kind of prophetic justice here, for it is Alfred Sherwood Romer whom her husband will succeed to the presidency of the AAAS. At present she, with other faculty wives, operates the shop in the Agassiz Museum. The Prices have two children, a boy, Don, who is finishing his doctoral work in Russian and Chinese and has recently returned from 2 years in Taiwan, and a daughter, Linda, a graduate of Smith College, who is married to a young English paleontologist who studied for the doctorate under Romer at Harvard and now is on the faculty of Yale.

Don Price is no stranger to the councils of the AAAS. He is no stranger to science. He has been intimately involved both with its substance and with its administration and its assessment in the broadest and deepest terms, over many years. He continues to pioneer in thinking about the place of science and of technology in our national life, and about the relation of science to public policy. When, on 15 January 1966, he assumes office as president-elect of the AAAS, he will be the second scholar drawn from outside the formal fields of the natural sciences to occupy that office in the last quarter of a century. The event is both diagnostic and immensely significant—for the Association itself, in token of the breadth and significance of the leadership it has assumed in the fields both of science and of public policy, and for the whole nation.—CARYL P. HASKINS, *President of the Carnegie Institution of Washington*