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## Fifty-Year Members

The AAAS bylaws provide that "members who have paid dues for fifty years may be excused from further payments and still retain all the privileges of membership." The Association has other provisions for emeritus membership, but the Fifty-Year Members are a particularly hardy group. Many of them are still active in teaching or research, and their most usual reply to the announcement of their new status is an expression of surprise that 50 years have gone by. They are also a loyal group. Occasionally a new Fifty-Year Member prefers to continue to pay dues, and this year a check came from one who attained that status over a decade ago; she said she thought it time to start paying dues again.

Effective 1 January, the Board of Directors has promoted 73 members to fifty-year status, the largest class ever elected. Included were two former AAAS presidents, Roger Adams and Paul B. Sears; nine members of the National Academy of Sciences; and a number of others who have made important contributions to science.

There is a special reason why this year's class is so large. When they joined, the annual dues were only \$3 a year, but there was also a \$5 entrance fee (there is none now). Under these arrangements, 251 new members came in at the beginning of 1917. But that year there was also a special inducement: the entrance fee was waived for anyone who joined AAAS within a year of first becoming a member of one of the societies affiliated with AAAS. Then, as now, fledgling scientists were encouraged by their elders to join both their specialty societies and the general scientific society of the country, and approximately 5000 new members of affiliated societies took advantage of the opportunity to save the entrance fee.

On the days following Christmas of 1917, a number of these new members were in New York for their first AAAS meeting. Some, including K. K. Darrow and Harry Steenbock, presented papers. All found it a big and varied program of scientific sessions, for meeting with the AAAS were some 40 affiliated and other societies, including the astronomical, physical, and mathematical societies, the American Association of University Professors, the American Psychological Association, the Automobile Club of America, the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, Sigma Xi, the American Congress on Internal Medicine, and the School Garden Association of America. All in all, the secretary estimated, about 8000 persons attended the combined meetings, of whom 2100 were registered for the AAAS sessions. The combined meetings, the secretary boasted, constituted "the largest and most important gathering of scientific men hitherto held in this country or elsewhere."

Anyone at that 1917 gathering who still attends AAAS meetings is aware of many changes, and also of substantial continuity. In 1917, one major symposium considered "the advisability of adopting the metric standard of weights and measures in the United States," and another dealt with "cancer and its control." The author of a paper on "biology and internationalism" failed to appear because he was in Europe. The press secretary reported that the paper that attracted the greatest amount of press attention was one on birth control.

To the 73 hardy and loyal members who came into AAAS in the year before that 1917 meeting, welcome to the Fifty-Year Club.

—DAEL WOLFE