

Turner, a consumer attorney—endorsed exploration of the science court concept in the belief that its findings would buttress their cases in future disputes over food additives.

Proponents of the science court argued that it would provide a sounder, more rational base for decision-making, separate fact from rhetoric, and screen out the value judgments which often color the recommendations of scientists. They also suggested that the court's findings would have a presumptive validity that would make it difficult for policymakers to "hide political motivations behind a smoke screen composed of scientific confusion."

But skeptics and opponents expressed doubt that the science court would work any better than existing mechanisms, and some even suggested it would cause harm. They argued that the court's findings would be "authoritarian," thus inhibiting the public debate on which a democracy depends. They also warned against separating the scientific and value-judgment aspects of an issue, lest the scientific aspects be given far more attention than they deserve. Many participants on both sides of the debate also expressed concern that the adversary system might put a premium on "winning at all costs" through rhetorical skills and other lawyerly wiles, to the detriment of the search for objective truth.

Objections were repeatedly raised that the name science court is inappropriate because it implies some kind of final verdict on controversial issues. Several speakers suggested alternatives built around the notion that the court would really be a board of inquiry, but others suggested that the name has become too engrained to be changed at this point.

Most participants in the conference endorsed the idea of an experiment to test the value of the science court concept, but very little thought has been given to what such an experiment might entail. The only member of Kantrowitz' task force who seems to have wrestled much with the matter is Allan Mazur, professor of sociology at Syracuse University, who describes himself as a "strong proponent" of an experiment but an "agnostic on the issue of a permanent, institutionalized Science Court." Mazur described a number of approaches toward evaluating whether or not the court functioned smoothly, whether it widened or squelched public debate, and whether it reached plausible conclusions. But he seems to be one of the few who is thinking of a genuine experiment. Most proponents are really

talking about a demonstration or pilot project whose outcome would be difficult to evaluate on other than subjective grounds.

Just who would conduct the experiment and who would pay for it remain uncertain. At one point the National Academy of Sciences indicated that it would be willing to serve as the host institution for an experiment, but key figures in the Academy have since cooled on the project, deeming it too fuzzy for meaningful investigation. (The proponents claim the Academy is simply afraid that the science court might prove a competitive threat to its own advisory committees.) Kantrowitz told *Science* that he hopes a university will serve as host institution, but no takers have yet been found.

At least one agency—the Environmental Protection Agency—has indicated it would be happy to refer a disputed issue to the court for an initial experiment. And the National Science Foundation has expressed a willingness to consider funding the experiment. But NSF's attitude will depend in part on how costly the experiment turns out to be. That is a matter which has received little sustained thought. One speaker estimated it would cost \$100,000 to \$300,000 for the initial experiment, while another suggested it would cost \$1 million to \$10 million for a year's worth of experiments.

Meanwhile, the federal judiciary is beginning to show interest in the science court. Chief Justice Warren Burger has appointed a small task force, headed by Judge Howard T. Markey, chief judge of the U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals, to meet with NSF to explore the court concept further. In fact, Markey and at least two other judges attended the colloquium. The judiciary is said to be interested partly because a science court approach might prove a useful adjunct to judicial proceedings, and partly because the judges want to keep a wary eye on any institution that has pretensions of becoming a "court."

—PHILIP M. BOFFEY

RECENT DEATHS

Aleck Bernstein, 54; associate professor of microbiology, The Medical College of Wisconsin; 11 July.

John H. Brown, 41; associate professor of pharmacology and experimental therapeutics and medicine, Louisiana

State University Medical Center; 12 July.

William T. Caldwell, 81; retired professor of chemistry, Temple University; 30 June.

George O. Curme, 87; chemist and former vice president, Union Carbide Corporation; 28 July.

Wayne Dennis, 70; professor emeritus of psychology, Brooklyn College; 21 July.

Philip R. Ferguson, 50; professor of chemistry, Eckerd College; 28 June.

Richard F. Flint, 74; professor emeritus of geology, Yale University; 5 June.

A. Robert Goldfarb, 68; associate professor of biochemistry, Wayne State University School of Medicine; 27 January.

Kermit Gordon, 59; president, Brookings Institution; 21 June.

Marcel Heiman, 66; clinical professor of psychiatry, Mount Sinai School of Medicine; 14 June.

Thomas B. Hinton, 51; professor of anthropology, University of Arizona; 30 June.

Victor E. Hoffman, 60; associate professor of education, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; 28 June.

John W. Lawlah, 71; former dean, College of Medicine, Howard University; 15 June.

Clayton G. Loosli, 71; former dean, School of Medicine, University of Southern California; 27 June.

Cyrus Mayshark, 49; dean, College of Applied Life Studies, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana; 24 July.

Robert L. Miller, 56; professor of marine geophysics, University of Chicago; 21 July.

Maurice G. Powell, 62; professor of chemistry, Potomac State College; 7 June.

John C. Slater, 75; Institute Professor emeritus, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; 25 July.

Arnold H. Sparrow, 61; senior radiobiologist, biology department, Brookhaven National Laboratory; 24 June.

Herbert E. Vandervoort, 50; associate professor of ambulatory and community medicine, School of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco; 15 July.

Jerome R. Vinograd, 63; professor of chemical biology, California Institute of Technology; 3 July.

Michael J. Walsh, 34; associate professor of pharmacology, Eastern Virginia Medical School; 16 June.

John N. Weber, 40; professor of marine geology, Pennsylvania State University; 1 June.

Herbert H. Williams, 55; professor of anthropology, San Francisco State University; 9 June.