

AAAS NEWS AND NOTES

edited by Coimbra Sirica

AAAS

Lifetime of Achievement Earns Golden an Award



William T. Golden

William T. Golden was an investment banker when he joined the U.S. Navy in World War II, but he had such a scientific turn of mind that he invented a device that decreased by two-thirds the scarce ammunition that gunners needed to practice on their anti-aircraft guns.

Though his passion was science, Golden had chosen Wall Street after reading "a romantic novel" during his senior year in college. Money was only a means, however, and once he had it, Golden, now 92, launched himself into a career in public life that this year earned him the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Lifetime Achievement Award.

Golden is best known for his notion that the nation should have an office of science advisor to the president, and for convincing President Harry S. Truman in 1950 to move forward on the idea. Fifty years and 10 presidents later, there is still a science advisor at The White House, as well as a presidential science advisory committee, another one of Golden's concepts. Most recently, Golden played a major role in convincing the U.S. State Department to open a position for its own science advisor.

"Bill Golden has devoted his life to advancing science and to making sure that public officials base their decisions on sound scientific principles," said AAAS CEO Alan I. Leshner. "His stature and his love of all things scientific have made him the perfect spokesperson for the worlds of science and engineering."

For 31 years—until 1999—Golden was treasurer of AAAS. With both financial support and guidance he helped build the Association's headquarters in Washington, DC, at 12th and New York Avenue. He also paid for the first year of AAAS's 30-year-old Congressional fellowship program, which has multiplied, annually sending dozens of young scientists and engineers out into the

various branches of government to learn policy and provide expertise.

Golden does not claim a deep grasp of science. "Without being competent in the details," he says, "I feel comfortable in the midst of it."

Over the years he became interested enough to take occasional courses in biology at Columbia University. In 1979, he discovered to his surprise that he had earned enough credits for a Master's degree. "I sent in \$10, and they sent me my degree."

The grandson of Lithuanian immigrants, Golden is grateful for the opportunities he's been given in the United States. As a 13-year-old boy, he obtained his ham radio

transmitting license, a defining moment. He says that his patriotism and his curiosity motivate him in the causes he chooses to support. He is particularly pleased to have served as co-chairman, with Nobel Prize Winner Joshua Lederberg, on the Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology and Government. Golden's work with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) earned him its highest honor, the Public Welfare Medal. Golden is responsible also for creating the Black Rock Forest Consortium, which operates a "natural living laboratory" in a 4000-acre forest along the Hudson River in New York State. He is Chairman Emeritus of the American Museum of Natural History.

Of his attachment to AAAS, Golden says, "AAAS has a soul, so I have affection as well as respect for it." The feeling is apparently mutual. Golden received his award from the Association at a ceremony on 16 February, during the 2002 Annual Meeting in Boston.

AAAS

Scientists Honored at 2002 Annual Meeting

During a ceremony on 16 February, at the 2002 AAAS Annual Meeting in Boston, the Association distributed awards that honored scientists and engineers for their lifetime achievements in research and in encouraging both international scientific cooperation and the study of science among those who might not otherwise have had the opportunity.

In addition to William T. Golden, who is featured in an accompanying article, the following individuals were honored at the event in Boston:

Guenther Bauer, physics professor at the Johannes Kepler University in Linz, Austria, won the AAAS Award for International Scientific Cooperation for his efforts in overcoming cultural and national frontiers, bringing researchers together at multinational meetings funded by both U.S. and international organizations.

Norman E. Borlaug, plant biologist and Nobel Laureate, was awarded the AAAS Philip Hauge Abelson Prize for his lifetime spent helping to meet the growing demand for high-yield agriculture. He is credited for starting the "Green Revolution" in the 1970s that reversed food shortages in India and Pakistan.

Etta Zuber Falconer, mathematician and Fuller E. Callaway Professor of Mathematics at Spelman College, and James H. M. Henderson, plant biologist and Chairman Emeritus of the Division of Natural Sciences at the Tuskegee Institute, won the AAAS Mentor Award for Lifetime Achievement. Throughout their professional lives, these two professors helped students of science and mathematics overcome barriers of race and gender to make the transition from high school to college and beyond.

Leticia Márquez-Magaña, professor of biology at San Francisco State University, received the AAAS Mentor Award for her activities in support of students of color. In particular, she was honored for setting up programs at UC-Berkeley and at Stanford University that support minority students both in their social and professional lives.

Ian Stewart, popular author and professor of mathematics at Warwick University, won the AAAS Award for Public Understanding of Science and Technology. He is best known for writing on mathematical themes in books and for newspapers and magazines.