

PRESIDENT OF THE TENNESSEE ACADEMY OF SCIENCE FOR 2006

I shall never forget my first encounter with the Tennessee Academy of Science (TAS). It was 1968 and I was in my first quarter as a faculty member at Tennessee Technological University (TTU) when a colleague invited me to attend the TAS annual meeting at Austin Peay. All the way there he kept talking about this wonderful new restaurant in Clarksville. By the time we arrived, I was prepared for a gourmet dining experience. Imagine my surprise when we finally arrived and pulled up in front of Shoney's. While the restaurant proved to be a considerable disappointment, the meeting was not. It was the first of many memorable experiences with the Academy over the years.

I was born in Illinois in 1941 and grew up on the Harris family farm near Macomb. I must say that farming was not my forte and I spent much of my time as a child dreaming of the day I could leave farm life behind. I graduated from Western High School and went on to earn a Bachelor's degree from Western Illinois University in Macomb. From there I went to Indiana University in Bloomington. While talking with my advisor about courses to take that first semester, he mentioned a brand new course they were offering for the first time. It was called Molecular Biology. That sounded interesting to me, so I enrolled, sparking a life-long interest in the field. I went on to earn a PhD in genetics in 1968. My dissertation topic was the genetic control of a set of isozymes in maize.

I am currently a Professor in the Department of Biology at TTU in Cookeville, where I have been since 1968. My wife Caroline and I were married in 1979, at which time I took on a ready made family. My three step-children are Mary Cay Khiel of Dandridge, John McKelvey of McMinnville, and Larry McKelvey, who lives in suburban Raleigh, North Carolina. Collectively, they have provided us with 10 beautiful grandchildren.

Over the years, I developed several new courses for the department, including Molecular Genetics, Genetic Engineering Laboratory, and graduate courses in Cytology and Cytogenetics. I have directed a number of graduate students in research involving isozymes, especially their use as indicators of taxonomic relationships among various groups of organisms. This work has led to numerous TAS paper presentations as well as other meetings and to several publications. In much of this work I have been privileged to have had the opportunity to collaborate with my friend and colleague, S. K. Ballal. One of my greatest honors as a faculty member was to be selected to serve as a Fulbright Fellow in India, where I lectured on molecular genetics at Marathwada University in Aurangabad.

During my years at TTU, I have taken an interest in a number of professional and public service activities. I was the Director of the Honors Program for several years, during which I served a term as President of the Southern Regional Honors Council. I have served for many years in the Faculty Senate, including a term as President and several years as the TTU representative to the Tennessee Board of Regents Faculty Sub-council. In recent years I have had a role in the



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development of the Regents On-line Degree Program (RODP). I am a member of the Curriculum Committee, which developed and implemented the program. I also serve as an advisor for the Interdisciplinary Studies degree program at TTU, working especially with students who are seeking a degree through RODP. I also developed and am teaching a RODP course in genetics for teachers who are seeking an endorsement in biology.

This brings me to my involvement in the Tennessee Academy of Science. Many of you know me by name, if not by face, as the person who for many years seemed to be constantly asking you for more money. I served from 1989-2003 as Treasurer of the Academy. From this perspective, I would like to take the opportunity to recognize those individuals who contribute so much of their time and effort to the work of the Academy. Especially, I would like to focus on five positions that constitute the core work of the Academy. Certainly I

would include the Treasurer. I know from experience how much time and effort is required and I salute Steve Murphree for agreeing to take on this task. Another bellwether position in the Academy is that of Secretary. Sally Swain and I have worked together for many years and I can say that she does a great job. Two other positions in the Academy that require a great deal of time and effort are the Director of the Junior Academy and the Editor of the *Journal of the Tennessee Academy of Science*. These are two of the most significant activities of the Academy and we are fortunate to have Jack Rhoton and Gore Ervin, respectively, for these two important positions. I also would like to recognize the work of Michael Redding as Meeting Coordinator. In recent years he has taken

over many of the routine tasks required in putting our annual meeting together, thereby easing the load on the Local Arrangements Committee as well as the President-Elect and the President. In addition to these five individuals, there are many others of you who provide service to the Academy as Executive Committee Members, as members of other committees, as organizers of the collegiate meetings and as section chairs or secretaries. All of your efforts are appreciated and are vital to the continued success of the Academy. Finally, I wish to salute my predecessors, those of you who have served as President of the Tennessee Academy of Science. These are some big shoes to fill and I appreciate the opportunity to serve the Academy as your President in 2006.