

RESEARCH CORPORATION
A FOUNDATION
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CHARLES H. SCHAUER
VICE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

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Ac 1/11/65

Dear Grote:

Relying as usual on Jennie to keep everything under control, I find that I let entirely too long time lapses to occur between my notes to you. Part of this may be embarrassment at my continuing threat to visit you and my continuing lack of follow-up to the threats. Anyhow, I can virtually guarantee that you will see Bill within the next four months while I remain an unknown quantity. Bill is pretty solidly hooked on an extended trip to follow shortly after our Annual Meeting in January, and I am witness to his promise to a visiting Australian with whom we have business connections in the gas cleaning industry that the trip will include Australia and Tasmania.

I suspect that you keep up with literature and with rumors of affairs relating to your interests much better than I do. I can't resist the occasional tidbit, however, and so wonder if you have heard any rumblings of possibilities for a fully steerable 400 - 600-foot dish housed in a radome for the Northeastern United States. Naturally it would have to have a counterpart in the Southwest, if indeed it progresses through the study phase.

I expect too that you have available the Journal of Geophysical Research, but on the off chance you haven't I am enclosing a paper that might be interesting.

I am sure you will remember R. R. Williams and may already have heard of his death a couple of weeks or so ago. He had been in frail health for sometime, but even so his death came as something of a blow. I had great admiration and affection for him. At the risk of unnecessary loading of the mail, I am enclosing a brief biographical sketch on the chance you'd be interested in it.

More frequently than you probably will believe, I think of you and your varied interests way off down under. I truly wish there were easier lines of communication. Hope all continues to go well.

Continuing best wishes,

Chap

Charles H. Schauer

CHS:JE
Enclosures

Robert R. Williams

The death of Dr. Williams removes from the world scene a scientist whose achievements are world-renowned but whose stature as a philanthropist has been recognized fully only by his close associates.

His life and the fruits of his scientific achievements were devoted to a wish for the betterment of human existence and the lot of mankind.

His influence, coupled with that of the substantial funds flowing from his creation, the Williams-Waterman Fund for the Combat of Dietary Diseases, was felt around the world.

His colleagues of Research Corporation remember him certainly for his great accomplishments but even more for his innate kindness, warmth and humanity, his boundless enthusiasms and determination to realize his ideals.

Robert Runnels Williams, the scientist and the man, leaves a rich legacy to inspire and guide the many whose lives were touched by his.

J. William Hinkley
President, Research Corporation

10/65

ROBERT RUNNELS WILLIAMS - 1886-1965

Few scientists have contributed so much of both scientific discovery and inspiration in human service as Robert R. Williams. Born in India in 1886 as the elder son of missionary parents, his strong interest in the Far East was only natural. Graduate training at the University of Chicago, where he obtained the M.S. degree in 1908, established a basis for his first professional opportunity of service as a chemist.

He began his career as a teacher in the Philippines in 1908. He joined the Philippines Bureau of Science in Manila in 1909 where he quickly sensed the importance of studies on the chemical basis for preventing and curing beriberi. As Chief Chemist he worked closely with the frontier pathologist, Dr. E. B. Vedder, and he was profoundly moved by seeing small children at death's door recover dramatically from beriberi when given small quantities of the laboratory concentrate he had prepared from rice bran. This experience influenced his entire life and sustained him in the many years of arduous research which followed.

After returning to the United States in 1915, Dr. Williams was with the Bureau of Chemistry in Washington until 1919 and with the Western Electric Company until 1924. In 1925 he became Chemical Director of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, a position he held until 1945. At no time during this period did he give up on the problem of isolating the anti-beriberi factor, even under pressure of jobs related to World War I. When the depression of the 30's deepened and brought about a reduction of the work week to three days, Dr. Williams spent the remaining four days at Columbia University and in the laboratory which he had established at his home in Summit, New Jersey attempting to obtain the life-giving substance in pure form. His son-in-law-to-be, Robert E. Waterman, joined with many others in helping to complete the classic and difficult chapter in chemical research. Their efforts culminated in success in 1936 with the synthesis of the factor, now known as thiamine or vitamin B₁, - 26 years after Dr. Williams' introduction to the subject by Dr. Vedder in Manila.

In keeping with his philosophy, Dr. Williams declined the opportunity for personal wealth from his invention which he recognized would mean so much to the world. This, despite the fact he had devoted a quarter century to the work and a great

deal of his own funds. Instead, he assigned the patents on the process for making vitamin B₁ to Research Corporation, a private, non-profit foundation, which agreed to administer the royalty income so as to promote scientific research. The bulk of the earnings was to be placed in a special fund to be known as the "Williams-Waterman Fund for the Combat of Dietary Diseases." Through the years the Fund has achieved an outstanding reputation in the world of science and has been instrumental in bringing about many contributions to fundamental knowledge and public health nutrition. More than 300 grants, totalling some \$4 million have been made throughout the world.

Upon his retirement from the Bell Telephone Laboratories in 1945, Dr. Williams became Director of Grants of Research Corporation, a position he held until 1950. From 1945 until his second retirement in 1956, he was Chairman of the Williams-Waterman Fund.

A member of the National Academy of Sciences, Dr. Williams took a great interest in the work of many organizations. From 1940 until 1959 he was a member of the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council. He served as Chairman of the Cereal Committee during this period and from 1951 to 1954 was Chairman of the Committee on Definitions and Standards of Identity for Foods. In these positions he traveled widely and wrote and lectured extensively in support of nutrition research and improvements in nutritional practices. He was the author of over 150 scientific papers which have appeared in the leading technical journals of the world.

As Chairman of the Committee on Cereals of the Food and Nutrition Board, he was identified with the introduction of enrichment of bread and flour in the United States and its extension to corn meal in the South. As Chairman of the Williams-Waterman Fund, he spearheaded the enrichment of rice, notably by a large scale experiment in Bataan, Philippines which demonstrated that beriberi could be eradicated completely. Under Dr. Williams' direction the Williams-Waterman Fund undertook a number of other public health nutrition programs, among them attacks on kwashiorkor, anemias and other deficiency diseases in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Dr. Williams was a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Public Health

Association. He was a member of the American Chemical Society, the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine, the American Society of Biological Chemists, the American Philosophical Society and the American Institute of Nutrition (President, 1957).

Honors accorded him include the Willard Gibbs Medal, 1938; Elliot Cresson Medal, 1940; John Scott Medal, 1941; Charles Frederick Chandler Medal, 1942; Perkin Medal, 1947; Medal of Honored Merit, China, 1942; Order Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, Cuba, 1950; Carlos Finlay Medal, Cuba, 1955; Proctor Prize, Research Society of America, 1955; Babcock-Hart Award, The Nutrition Foundation, 1964.

Dr. Williams received the Honorary Doctor of Science Degree from Ottawa University, Ohio Wesleyan University, the University of Chicago, Columbia University, Yale University, Stevens Institute of Technology and the University of Denver. He was also awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree by Washington University, St. Louis.

Dr. Williams was particularly proud of the recognition of his work by the Republic of the Philippines, the country he regarded as his second home. These included honorary memberships in the Philippine Association of Nutrition and the Philippine Society for Public Health, the Medal of the Chemical Society of the Philippines, and Honorary Citizenship of Bataan. He maintained an active interest in scientific affairs in the Philippines through his membership in the American-Philippine Science Foundation.

Although he curtailed many of his activities in recent years, Dr. Williams remained a wise and respected elder statesman of science and humanitarianism. In 1961 he was named an honorary member of the American Dietetic Association and completed a book, "Toward the Conquest of Beriberi," which was published by the Harvard University Press.

In his honor, Research Corporation, in 1961, endowed the Robert R. Williams Professorship in the Institute of Nutrition Sciences of Columbia University. Now nearing completion are the Williams Laboratories for research and nutrition studies at Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore, India, financed by a grant from the Williams-Waterman Fund and named for Dr. Williams and his wife Augusta, his lifelong partner in unselfish dedication.