

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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DEDICATION
of the
HOWARD E. TATEL TELESCOPE
at the
NATIONAL RADIO ASTRONOMY OBSERVATORY
Green Bank, West Virginia
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Remarks of Dr. Alan T. Waterman
Director, National Science Foundation

HONORING SCIENCE

Dr. Berkner, Congressman Staggers, Friends, and Guests:
Today is one of those all-too-rare occasions on which we may give ourselves over to honoring science and the men who make it possible. Most of our day-to-day effort consists of the toil, sweat, and tears that seem to be necessary to insure the continuance of scientific effort. The Green Bank project has had an ample share of this kind of effort, as those of us can testify who have lived with its budgetary vicissitudes. Today, however, we can put these things behind us and join in the general satisfaction that the accomplishment of a major step forward brings with it.

Just one year ago we were meeting here to join in a symbolic ground-breaking ceremony, marking the beginning of

a new observatory. On the anniversary of that occasion we are here to dedicate the first of the two major instruments that will constitute the National Radio Astronomy Observatory. The National Science Foundation congratulates Associated Universities and the Blaw-Knox Corporation on having passed the first milestone.

Such a ceremony as this is, of course, in no way essential to our final objective. We could push the observatory through to completion and put it into operation without so much as an hour's loss for ceremonial purposes. But this occasion affords opportunity for the scientific community to observe a significant step in an impressive undertaking, while at the same time it attracts the attention of others to the plans and the thinking of those engaged in the pursuit of pure science. Such an individual chooses science as a career not because he thinks it is going to make him rich or even famous, but because it offers spiritual and intellectual satisfaction beyond those of other fields, and because it satisfies the creative urge associated with all pioneering. He may not think of it in those terms but he has in effect chosen to dedicate himself to the service of mankind.

It is appropriate, therefore, that we should, from time to time, pause to honor the intellectual labors that have done so much to enrich and benefit mankind, and in so doing to honor the men who have devoted themselves to their pursuit.

Fifty years ago, The London Times, commenting on "The

Jubilee of the Oxford Museum," observed,

There was no practical need for Tycho Brahe to don his richest robes when he entered his observatory; but our hearts warm to him for this visible sign of reverence for his work.

Similarly, it could be said that there is no practical need for us to gather here today to dedicate the great steel structure that will shortly give us yet another window on the universe. But we do so because we wish to honor those activities that are undertaken solely because they widen our horizons and increase our storehouse of knowledge.

The United States has lagged behind other nations in the proper acknowledgment of, and tribute to, intellectual achievement. Where is there a street named for a poet or a scientist, and how meagerly few are the monuments we have raised to artists and scholars! In Russia, by contrast, the great thoroughfares are named for musicians and poets, the big new university in Moscow honors the scientist, Lomonosov, and there is scarcely a square that has not its statue to a writer or scholar. Nor must we lose sight of the fact that these visible tributes to intellectual activity are powerful incentives along with the material advantages the State holds out as the reward for scholarly achievement.

For years we have been glorifying the business man, the banker, the entrepreneur--in general, men of affairs, men of action. Is it any wonder, then, that they have become the symbols of achievement and the scholar the long-hair who

failed to make the grade? Surely there is room in the great diversity and richness of our culture for the proper respect for both.

Circumstances have conspired to make this a particularly happy occasion. We may be pardoned if we still bask a little in the glow of Pioneer's spectacular flight. We take special satisfaction in the role played by radio astronomy in the successful tracking of the moon rocket. It is typical of scientists, incidentally, that we should have received such prompt and generous congratulations from fellow scientists around the world.

We are especially fortunate in having with us to dedicate the new telescope a man whose family has for generations been in the habit of founding observatories. Otto Struve's great grandfather, Friedrich Wilhelm Struve, built and became the first director of the great observatory at Pulkovo, a post which passed to his son upon his death. His uncle moved to Neubabelsberg--and completely remodeled--the old observatory of Berlin, and his father was Professor of Astronomy at the University of Kharkov.

Dr. Struve's own career in astronomy is too well known to need recapitulation here, but I might remind you that it includes in a long list of distinguished achievements and honors the founding of the McDonald Observatory in Texas. We are glad to have him take part in this ceremony today, for his presence

brings with it the aura of a great scientific tradition. We hope for the observatory that is being established here some of the lustre that has attended the observatories associated with the name of Struve.

For all of us the occasion is one of high anticipation. The realization of fine new research facilities is always a cause for rejoicing, but certainly never more so than in this the dawn of the space age.

The Foundation joins with Associated Universities, with the staff of the Observatory, and with friends here at Green Bank in wishing for the Observatory a brilliant future as it prepares to join the ranks of those whose task it is to probe the unknown.