



The Walter F. Snyder Award for 1996

Presented to

ROBERT M. BROWN

The Walter F. Snyder Award is conferred each year upon a professional who upholds the strong ideals and commitment to environmental health subscribed by the award's namesake – the man who served as NSF International's Executive Director for more than 20 years.

It is fitting that we bestow the 1996 award upon a man who strove to achieve an NSF of Snyder's dreams.

Robert M. Brown joined the Executive Staff of the organization in September, 1965, was elected secretary-treasurer in November, and president of NSF in 1967, a position he occupied with distinction for 13 years.

Brown prepared for his career in environmental health by earning a bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of South Carolina in 1935. Following graduation, he assumed industrial health positions; first with the South Carolina State Board of Health, then with the St. Louis (Missouri) Health Division. These work experiences were augmented by active participation in the American Public Health Association, the American Industrial Hygiene Association, the National Society of Professional Engineers, and the American Academy of Environmental Engineers.

This phase of his career lasted for 13 years, during which time he also studied for and received a master's degree in Public Health from Johns Hopkins University. At the conclusion of his studies, he accepted an assistant professorship in

the Department of Public Health at Yale University.

After two years in academia, he was named chief for the Bureau of Environmental Hygiene, Maryland State Department of Health in Baltimore. By this time, his reputation as a respected expert was well-known, even in the highest levels of government; this led to his appointment by the U.S. Public Health Service, Office of the Surgeon General to serve as an advisor on public health traineeships and urban water supply and sewerage legislation.

Brown was invited in 1965 to join Dr. Henry Vaughan, then president of NSF, in a research study seeking a methodology for solving problems besetting man and his environment. It was during this period that Dr. Vaughan began a search for a new president, for a leader who was educated and experienced in public health, tireless in his efforts to bring groups together to discuss and resolve mutual concerns, and a natural-born manager, communicator, and educator. He and the Trustees believed that all of those qualities were to be found in Robert Brown.

Brown joined NSF during a period of transition, when the horizons of *public* health were being greatly expanded to encompass *environmental* health as well. It was Brown's mission to guide NSF through this transition.

Characteristically, he accepted his mission with enthusiasm. Bolstered by an innate sense of business, Brown devised

and implemented a series of improved management techniques and operating procedures for the organization. He spearheaded NSF's movement into new environmental program areas: water quality, wastewater, air quality, and solid waste. He also guided the organization through an expansion of its staff and facilities, and enveloped sound fiscal management practices to ensure its continued growth.

During Robert Brown's leadership, the development of plastic pipe standards (and the subsequent spread of plastic pipe usage throughout the nation) was a significant success story. Other standards and criteria were also adopted because NSF acted as a trusted neutral organization to help resolve differences and to

unite groups in finding solutions to problems of environmental health.

While at NSF, Brown spoke often of the existence of a "second environment." To quote him, "The first, of course, is the natural environment: the water of the world, the earth's delicate envelope of air, the soil on which we depend. The 'second environment' is the one man makes himself . . ."

For these contributions and others accumulated over a lifetime in the field, NSF International and the National Environmental Health Association take great pleasure in honoring Robert Brown by presenting him the 1996 Walter F. Snyder Award for Achievement in Attaining Environmental Quality.

Past Recipients of the Walter F. Snyder Award

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