

Executive Directors

The burden of work on the secretary and the creation of the post of executive director are closely related. In 1938, the office of the Society at Columbia University consisted of four persons, of whom one was office manager, Miss Evelyn Hull. The secretary, since 1921, was R. G. D. Richardson, who had signified his intent to retire from that position and in fact did formally tender his resignation at the Council of 27 December 1939. In recognition of the increasing load on the secretary, a committee with L. M. Graves as chairman recommended in September 1940 *inter alia* that the secretary, when and if he deemed it desirable, should request the Council that provision be made for another associate secretary or assistant secretary at the same or a neighboring institution. This was not the first time that such relief had been instituted, for Mark H. Ingraham was already associate secretary with a variety of assigned duties quite different from the supervision of scientific programs, such as fund raising. The committee however recommended in favor of flexibility of assignment of duties among the secretary, associate secretaries, and the treasurer and against the formalization of a position of associate secretary for financial affairs.

Notwithstanding this recommendation the Council of 26 November 1943 authorized the designation of one of the associate secretaries as associate secretary for Financial Affairs.

As the country emerged from World War II it was apparent that more extensive reorganization of the Society was required. The Council of 16 April 1948 received a report from a Committee on Reorganization, with W. L. Ayres as chairman. Among the changes approved by the Council was one to divide the office of secretary into two offices, executive director and secretary. The former was to be a full-time paid employee of the Society, "in charge of the central office of the Society and charged with the general administration of the affairs of the Society once policies have been set by the Council and its Executive Committee." Duties formerly performed by the associate secretary for Financial Affairs devolved on the executive director and the former office was eliminated. The report specified that the executive director was to be nominated by the Council and approved by the Trustees and the bylaws

concerning the executive director initially so stated. It was belatedly noted that the Trustees control Society funds and should be the ones to execute an employment contract. A change in bylaws in 1960 specified that the executive director is appointed by the Trustees with approval of the Council. It was deemed desirable that the executive director be a mathematician.

In creating the post of executive director and in dividing the duties, that committee made the following statement:

The secretary of the Society will continue to be the principal officer of the Society concerned with policy making. He will work with the president, the Council, and its committees in setting the policies of the Society. While the secretary and the executive director must cooperate closely in their work, the division of their functions can be described briefly in the two phrases "policy making" and "administration." Once the Council has set the policy of the Society it will be the duty of the executive director to carry out the administration.

It was the stated intent of the committee, approved by the Council, to relieve the pressure on the secretary and to make the job manageable.

A committee consisting of J. R. Kline, chairman, W. L. Ayres, and W. T. Martin was appointed by President Einar Hille to nominate a candidate for executive director. The committee gave serious consideration to about a dozen names. At the Council of 30 August 1949, the committee offered the name of Holbrook M. MacNeille, whom the Council approved subject to approval by the Board of Trustees, which had already been secured in essence. MacNeille began work on 14 November 1949. Toward the end of a five-year term he was commended and recommended for reappointment but signified his wish not to be reappointed.

Along with the recommendation for reappointment came the recommendation, subsequently incorporated in the bylaws, that a Liaison Committee, consisting of the president, the secretary and the treasurer, be appointed to advise the executive director between meetings of the Council or the Board of Trustees. Moreover, in background correspondence and incorporated in the letter of appointment to the second executive director, it is indicated that communication with the Liaison Committee, except in purely financial matters, should be through the secretary.

The next executive director, beginning on 1 September 1954, was John H. Curtiss. In the course of the search, there were at least twenty-five names considered, several quite seriously. Curtiss was elected to a two-year term followed by a three-year term. Although he was offered reappointment he declined.

The third executive director was Gordon L. Walker, elected in 1959. At this time there was an advertised search. He was offered a two-year term, which was followed by continuing appointments until his retirement in the middle of 1977.

The fourth executive director was William J. LeVeque who served from 1 July 1977 until his retirement toward the end of 1988. His appointment again followed a substantial advertised search.

The post of executive director is difficult. One wants a competent mathematician of sufficient stature to be respected by mathematicians but the duties require empathy with mathematicians and administrative skills rather than substantive mathematics. Some executive directors and associates have tried to arrange time to continue mathematical work and the Society Trustees and Brown University have been receptive to adjunct appointments to facilitate this but it appears never to have worked.

The increasing scope and bulk of the position of executive director can be seen from the following summary figures. The chosen years correspond to the changes in executive director, except the last.

Year	Number of Members	Number of Employees	Income
1948	3805	10	\$ 145,000
1954	4680	20	294,000
1959	6652	63 ¹	509,400
1977	16987	177	5,187,000
1987	20504	218	13,430,000

These figures are presented quite diversely in the records because fiscal years and reporting formats change with time, so that strictly comparable figures are not available. In addition to the change in number of members, which is apparent, there is a large increase in activity in publication that affects both number of employees and income and there is substantial inflation.

The position of executive director grew in complexity to the point that assistants with varying titles were appointed. These were

Lincoln K. Durst, Deputy Director
1970–1984

Jill P. Mesirov,² Assistant and then
Associate Executive Director
1982–1985

James W. Maxwell³ Associate Executive Director
1984–

James A. Voytuk, Associate Executive Director
1985–

¹1960–61 budget



H. M. MacNeill

HOLBROOK MANN MACNEILLE

Holbrook Mann MacNeille was born in New York on 11 May 1907. He graduated with highest honors from Swarthmore College in 1928. He was a Rhodes Scholar at Balliol College, Oxford in 1928–1930 with a B.A. in 1930 and an M.A. in 1947. His Ph.D. in 1935 was from Harvard. He was Sterling Fellow at Yale in 1935–1936 and Benjamin Peirce Instructor at Harvard in 1936–1938. During the interval 1933–1938 he was secondarily a partner in the Dale Richardson Laboratories, where a principal product was prepared dogfish for dissection in school laboratories and which operated on the island where he had a summer home. From 1938–1947 he was associate professor and professor at Kenyon College. During several of those years he was on leave as scientific liaison officer in the Office of Scientific Research and Development in London, 1944–1946, and scientific director in 1946–1948. He spent more than a year as chief of the fundamental research branch of the Atomic Energy Commission. He then became executive director of the American Mathematical Society in November 1949, where he served until 1954. He was professor and chairman of the Department of Mathematics at Washington University in 1954–1961 and then professor at Case Institute of Technology (later part of Case Western Reserve University) from 1961. He died on 30 September 1973.



J. H. Curtiss

JOHN HAMILTON CURTISS

John Hamilton Curtiss was born in Evanston, IL on 23 December 1909. His father was the mathematician D. R. Curtiss, then on the faculty of Northwestern University. He took his A.B. at Northwestern in 1930, his S.M. from the University of Iowa in 1931, and his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1935. He taught at Cornell until 1943, when he went to the National Bureau of Standards. In 1944 he became chief of the Applied Mathematics Division. He was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal of the U.S. Department of Commerce in 1949. He was at the Courant Institute in 1953–1954. He became executive director of the American Mathematical Society in 1954 and remained there until 1959. He then became professor of Mathematics at the University of Miami, and served as chairman for two years. He retired in 1975 and died on 13 August 1977.



Frank Walker

GORDON LOFTIS WALKER

Gordon Loftis Walker was born in Salt Lake City, UT on 29 October 1912. He received a B.S. from Louisiana State University in 1937 and an M.A. in 1938. His Ph.D. was from Cornell in 1942. He taught at the University of Delaware, Temple University, and Purdue University before becoming head of the mathematics section of the Research Center of the American Optical Company in 1954. He moved to the American Mathematical Society as executive director in 1959 and remained in that position until his retirement in 1977. He continued thereafter as a consultant to the Society working in the programming of substantial tasks in the computerization of Society procedures.



W^m J. Keegan

WILLIAM JUDSON LEVEQUE

William Judson LeVeque was born in Boulder, CO on 9 August 1923. He received his B.A. degree from the University of Colorado in 1944. His M.A. was from Cornell University in 1945 and his Ph.D. from the same institution in 1947. He was Benjamin Peirce Instructor at Harvard in 1947–1949 and then went to the University of Michigan where he rose to the rank of professor and was chairman of the department in 1967–1970. From 1970 to 1977 he was professor of Mathematics at the Claremont Graduate School. In 1977 he became executive director of the American Mathematical Society, a post he held until his retirement in 1988. This was not his first post with the Society. In particular, he was executive editor of *Mathematical Reviews* during 1965–1966 while on leave from the University of Michigan.

With the anticipated retirement of LeVeque about August 1988, a search committee was established in 1986, consisting of F. W. Gehring, chairman, G. D. Mostow, F. P. Peterson, E. Pitcher, and P. A. Sally. The committee gave various levels of consideration to forty candidates or potential candidates for the position of executive director. The committee recommendation, selected by the Council and approved by the Trustees, was William H. Jaco. His Ph.D. is from the University of Wisconsin under D. R. McMillan, Jr. His principal academic appointments have been at Michigan, Rice, and Oklahoma State. His most recent appointment was as Professorial Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne in 1987-1988.

The Society had some difficulty accommodating to the position of executive director. The creation of the position made it possible for the Council and the Trustees to relinquish detailed work and administrative functions that they had been performing but they did not always do so. The Trustees never could bring themselves to the position of some corporations that the Trustees function entirely by employing a chief executive officer, appraising the work, and firing if it is not satisfactory. There are at least three reasons. One was the inertia of change. A second was a wish to keep control in the hands of the amateur volunteers who are active research mathematicians. The effort to control shifts from creating policy to performing operations. Finally, the presence of *Mathematical Reviews* with a strong executive editor and a second geographic location sometimes put the Trustees in a mediating position. The fact that the operation of the office has become increasingly more technical with publication in-house and computerization of records and communication has greatly increased dependence on the executive director and the staff. They are needed for their expertise as well as to accomplish the work.