

With unusual persistence, remarkable insight and extraordinary accuracy of observation, Oswald T. Avery has devoted the greater part of his scientific career to the study of the pneumococcus.

Animated by an unsurpassed intellectual curiosity and a desire to conquer one of the most deadly enemies of man, he undertook to elucidate in logical sequence the biological activities, the immunological characteristics and the pathogenic properties of the pneumococcus. In this he so far succeeded that today it is fair to say that more is known about this organism than about any other human parasite.

Were this all it would be a unique accomplishment, but quite early in the course of his investigations he became interested in searching for a chemical explanation for the type specificity of pneumococci. As a consequence, he discovered and identified the capsular polysaccharides and demonstrated their role in determining this specificity.

He furthermore succeeded in throwing light on the immunological relationships of the intracellular constituents