

GENETICS SOCIETY OF AMERICA

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY - TREASURER

BROOKHAVEN NATIONAL LABORATORY

UPTON, L. I., NEW YORK

Department of Genetics  
University of Wisconsin  
Madison 6, Wisconsin

March 24, 1950

Dr. Joshua Lederberg  
Department of Genetics  
University of Wisconsin  
Madison 6, Wisconsin

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Dear Josh:

You may have in mind that the Genetics Society of America in December, 1949, voted to arrange a program at its annual meeting in September, 1950, to celebrate the semi-centennial of the founding of genetics as a science. A committee (L. C. Dunn, C. L. Huskins, I. Michael Lerner, P. C. Mangeldorf, and myself) was appointed to make plans for this program. The committee has reached the definite conclusion that the meeting in 1950 of the Genetics Society is a very appropriate time to review and assess the progress in genetics and its contribution to other fields in these 50 years.

Furthermore, the committee feels that this is an important occasion, not only for genetics and biology, but for the progress of science generally. There is no need to inform you of the disagreement in various parts of the world over the basic principles of genetics, nor that the freedoms necessary for scientific inquiry are being challenged in some countries. It is the considered opinion of the program committee that the best answer to the anti-genetics propaganda, and anti-science propaganda, in general, is to present a program at this Golden Jubilee which will put principal emphasis on the positive achievements of genetics, both theoretical and applied. This should not be done in a spirit of either boastfulness or complacency, but nevertheless should stress accomplishments with emphasis on the conditions of freedom and international cooperation among scientists under which the progress was made. No single science has a better opportunity to speak for the cause of the freedom of science in general than has genetics during this Golden Jubilee year.

It is proposed that the meetings begin with some attention to the historical aspects. Some of the principal theoretical and practical problems with which genetics has been concerned will then be considered. It is the hope of the committee that each speaker will not only indicate the development and the most promising lines of advance in the fields which he surveys, but will also speculate a little on possibilities for future thought and discovery.

At one of the sessions at these meetings, the general topic will be "Physiology of the gene". We wish you to give one of the papers at this session, at which

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Beadle, Ephrussi, and Sonneborn are also being asked to speak.

It seems reasonably certain that funds will be available to put on a very worth while program of three days' duration at the meeting at Columbus, Ohio, September 11 to 14 inclusive, and to assemble the papers for an early formal publication. In order to secure as wide a distribution as possible of this volume in this and other countries, it is proposed that individual rights to royalties be waived, and that the resultant savings be employed to decrease the purchase price of the volume.

The committee is sure that you will appreciate the importance of this Golden Jubilee program and that we all need and shall value your participation. Will you kindly let me have your reply as soon as possible?

Very truly yours,

  
M. R. Irwin  
For the Committee

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