

During the past fifty years enormous strides have been made in lengthening the average life expectancy of individuals. Our rapid progress in this field has so pre-empted public and scientific attention that there is little awareness of the fact that virtually nothing has been accomplished in lessening senility or in lengthening the life span of the species. The increase of expectancy of persons past sixty has increased only about two years during the past one hundred years.

The massive research programs that are now being mounted against cancer, stroke, and heart disease, both by governmental and private institutions, are yielding important results, and research on these specific diseases should be encouraged and sustained in every way. A study of mortality due to these diseases indicates, however, that their complete elimination would not greatly extend the average life expectancy or delay the occurrence of senility. *On the contrary we may face the prospect of the extended survival of helpless, unproductive, unhappy beings.*

On the basis of knowledge which is largely new within the past decade, we believe that it is well within the range of scientific possibility to attain enough understanding of the causes of the aging process to retard the rate of aging in the human individual. The successful pursuit of such a project would lengthen the life span without lengthening the period of senility. In short, it may well be possible to increase the number of years of life which may be lived with comparatively youthful vigor.

The importance of basic biological research for this cause is not to be underestimated. While substantial support is already available,
Such a program would be one of the boldest and one of the most exciting scientific endeavors ever undertaken. Present knowledge warrants support from scientists, the government, foundations, and others on a scale commensurate with the magnitude and urgency of the problem. Additional research, pursued with the proper emphasis and support, could result in benefits even to individuals now alive.

The outstanding progress of biochemistry