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A PROFESSIONAL NOT A RESEARCH SOCIETY

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The past year has undoubtedly been the most significant in the history of SWST. Under the leadership of Ben Jayne, and with the help of Bill Nearn and many others, it has been possible to bring this SWST quarterly, *Wood and Fiber*, to life. I feel that this past year will be looked upon as the time when Wood Science and Technology moved from the formative years into position as a legitimate and recognized profession. Although we still have a considerable job ahead in making more visible the responsibilities and potential contributions of Wood Science and Technology, *Wood and Fiber* will make possible much more rapid progress.

We could be carried away in congratulating ourselves for accomplishments of the Society this far. However, as a professional organization representing those with academic and industrial training in Wood Science and Technology, we have a serious shortcoming. Our membership is less than 600. There are probably several thousand production and management personnel and researchers in this country who are eligible for membership. Another 100 to 150 are being graduated from the universities each year. We must earn the support of a larger proportion of these groups. This can be done if our present members believe in and are willing to speak in behalf of the Society.

Before we support any organization, we must understand its objectives and be in sympathy with them. In talking with people from the forest products industry, both members and non-members, I find that there is often a lack of understanding about the purposes of SWST. There seems to be a common feeling that our organization is a "research society" set up so that academicians and fundamental researchers can find someone to talk to. This is not the intended nature of the Society, either past or present. The Ph.D. working in a laboratory and the B.S. degree holder doing qual-

ity control work in a particleboard plant are equally important members of our Society. Two important purposes of SWST are: (1) to provide a means of communication between all those trained in areas of Wood Science or Technology and (2) to improve the profession, internally by guiding and encouraging academic programs and externally by developing greater recognition of our field. It isn't stated in the constitution, but I feel that our one most important mission is to provide a professional home for graduates of Wood Science and Technology curriculums.

It is unfortunate, though understandable, that most of our society activities seem to be directed toward the scientists in our group rather than toward the practicing technologists. One reason for this is that the researchers are the members attending the annual meetings and are usually in a better position to take an active role in society affairs. We will be making a real effort to involve more practicing technologists in the activities of the Society.

Publication of *Wood and Fiber* might be taken as another example of a Society activity aimed at only the scientist portion of our membership. This is not the intent. We would like to have the quarterly contain papers of value to all members. To what extent this can be accomplished will depend upon those in a position to contribute papers. Scientific papers are relatively easy to obtain. Papers by and for the practicing industrial wood technologist are rare birds.

If you believe that a strong professional society is important, you can be of great help in building our membership to a level where we can accomplish much more. Discuss the Society with colleagues who are potential members. Explain why SWST exists and what we hope to accomplish. Remember to point out that we are a professional *not* a research society.

JOHN G. HAYGREEN
PRESIDENT SWST