

presidential address

Remarks by the incoming President at the Business Meeting, AMS 61st Annual Meeting, 19 January 1981, San Diego, Calif.

This occasion calls for me to tell you something of my views of the major problems and opportunities facing the AMS. This could take a considerable amount of time, but fortunately I can shorten these comments a great deal because Bob White's remarks and the reports we have heard from the commission chairmen have reviewed these areas very ably. My brief remarks will be limited to the view ahead as I see it and to significant changes in which the AMS is likely to be involved. I have chosen to look past the most immediately urgent issue, the litigation in which the Society is involved.

Changes affecting the AMS will result from the strengths and successes of our publications and the activities of our boards and committees, and from external changes occurring in related scientific and technological fields and in the relation of the atmospheric sciences and professions to the society in which we live. Let me mention just a few of the issues that I expect will affect the AMS in the next year. For each of these issues, decisions that the Society may be called upon to make will inevitably be based both on the internal capabilities of the Society and on changes external to the AMS.

- 1) The first issue concerns the relationship of oceanography to the AMS. Our *JOURNAL OF PHYSICAL OCEANOGRAPHY* has attained a highly respected position and is regarded by many as the definitive journal in the field. In many other ways oceanographers have important parts to play in the Society. Nevertheless, oceanographers feel the need for their own organization, one representing the breadth of marine interests extending well beyond those of the AMS. As our colleagues consider this issue, the AMS will try to be responsive and helpful. Can we and they find a solution that will result in closer, not weaker, ties between meteorologists and oceanographers and preserve our present strengths?
- 2) The National Climate Program is expected to greatly stimulate interdisciplinary studies. How should the Society respond? We have decided to move toward an interdisciplinary *JOURNAL OF CLIMATE*. This will bring us into close contact with a broader community than

we have dealt with before. Should we expect to broaden our membership or should we seek affiliations with related societies?

- 3) Technological developments in remote sensing, data processing and transmission, numerical prediction, and automation of weather service functions have been with us for some time, but their effects are increasing and are having substantial effects on our members and on the Society. The interface between private and government services is likely to experience major changes in coming years. The AMS has already played a useful role in helping to sort out the needs and interests of the federal government, the private sector, and the universities relating to meteorological data. What further specific steps should we be considering in this area?
- 4) The roles of minorities and women are changing, but slowly. The AMS has made notable efforts to expand opportunities for minorities and women, but we cannot claim fully satisfactory results. We must look for ways to further expand opportunities, especially at levels above entry level.
- 5) Last, but not least, legislation of the past decade relating to environmental protection on the one hand and resource development on the other sets the stage for active competition that seems likely to involve the AMS, if only peripherally. Are there actions the Society should take in this area?

To summarize, each of these issues seems likely to drive the Society into more complex relationships with other institutions and to add further dimensions to our program. Clearly, the AMS is becoming more complex, its activities and governance more complicated and more difficult. For the issues outlined here, decisions will be needed on several levels in the coming years. Most important will be the "many small but correct decisions," which, in John von Neumann's words, are required to move the larger society toward desired goals. I will welcome the views and advice of all AMS members on the issues raised here.—*Robert G. Fleagle*