

12-9-1960

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The American College, "Biographical Data - Gaylord P. Harnwell" (1960). *Archival Documents*. Paper 11.
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Biographical Data

Gaylor P. Harnwell
President, University of Pennsylvania

Dr. Gaylord P. Harnwell has been president of the University of Pennsylvania since July 1, 1953.

A nationally known atomic physicist, he first became associated with the University in 1938 when he was appointed professor of physics and director of the Randal Morgan Laboratory of Physics.

Dr. Harnwell, a native of Evanston, Ill., attended Evanston Township High School before entering Haverford College, from which he was graduated with the degree of bachelor of science in 1924.

He studied at Cambridge University, England, in 1924-25, and later at Princeton University where he received the degree of master of arts in 1926 and the degree of doctor of philosophy in 1927.

He also holds honorary degrees from the following colleges and universities: doctor of laws--Ursinus College, Princeton University, Dropsie College, University of Pittsburgh, Columbia University, Washington College, Northwestern University, Brown University, Swarthmore College, College of William and Mary, and the University of Pennsylvania; doctor of science--Temple University, Haverford College, Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital of Philadelphia, Franklin and Marshall College, and the University of Southern California; doctor of pedagogy--La Salle College; doctor of civil law--The Divinity School in Philadelphia; doctor of the science of pedagogy--Elizabeth-town College.

Dr. Harnwell was a National Research Council Fellow at the California Institute of Technology in 1927-28.

In 1928 he returned to Princeton to teach physics, serving successively as an assistant professor and an associate professor there until he joined the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania.

Besides holding the Mary Amanda Wood Professorship of Physics and serving as director of the Morgan Laboratory and chairman of the Physics Department at Pennsylvania, he also was appointed professor of radiologic physics in the University's Graduate School of Medicine.

Already widely known for his research work in atomic and nuclear physics, and in accoustics, Dr. Harnwell was one of the first members of the Pennsylvania faculty to be called into the government service during the second World War and was granted a leave of absence from the University.

From 1942 to 1946 he served in the position of director of the University of California Division of War Research, U. S. Navy Radio and Sound Laboratory, San Diego, California.

For his services in that capacity Dr. Harnwell was awarded the Medal for Merit, accompanied by a citation calling attention to his contributions to the war effort.

In that citation he was credited with having been "directly responsible for the severing by submarines of the last sea route from Japan to the mainland of Asia by his intelligent and constant supervision of the work of preparing for the United States Navy certain special weapons and devices."

The citation further stated that: "His continuous devotion to the perfection of these devices, and his wholehearted cooperation with all those in military command, contributed directly to the destruction of the enemy's ships and shore establishments, and thus to the victory."

In addition to his University of Pennsylvania connections, Dr. Harnwell was chairman of the Ordnance Committee of the late Research and Development Board of the Department of Defense and is a member of the Committee on Undersea Warfare of the National Research Council.

In September 1958 he received the Navy Distinguished Public Service Award for his outstanding contributions to the Department of the Navy in the field of scientific research and development.

Dr. Harnwell served on the Advisory Board of the United States Naval Ordnance Laboratory, Silver Spring, Md., and is a member of the Advisory Panel on Ordnance, Transport and Supply of the Department of Defense, as well as a member of the Advisory Panel for Scientific Information of the National Science Foundation.

In February, 1958, he was appointed to serve on a special Advisory Panel to the congressional Subcommittee on Military Applications of Atomic Energy.

Until assuming his duties as President of the University of Pennsylvania he was consulting editor of the "International Series in Pure and Applied Physics," published by McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.; editor of "The Review of Scientific Instruments," and editorial director of "Physics Today," the latter two being publications of the American Institute of Physics with which he has been closely associated since its foundation.

Dr. Harnwell is the author of "Principles of Electricity and Electromagnetism," published in 1929; the co-author, with John J. Livingood, of "Experimental Atomic Physics," published in 1936; and co-author, with Dr. William E. Stephens, of "Atomic Physics," an advanced text published in September, 1955, by the McGraw-Hill Book Company.

"Russian Diary, " his most recent book, was published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 1960 and is an account of a tour taken in the summer of 1958 by Dr. Harnwell and a number of other prominent American educators to educational and research institutions in the U.S.S.R. and other countries in the eastern hemisphere.

During the summer of 1960 he visited Iran at the request of the government of that country and under the auspices of the United States Department of State to advise on the inauguration of an Iranian university patterned along the lines of American institutions of higher learning.

He is a Fellow of the American Physical Society and the Acoustical Society, a member of the American Philosophical Society, the Newcomen Society of North America, Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi, Sigma Pi Sigma, Alpha Epsilon Delta, Beta Alpha Psi, Sigma Tau Sigma, and Alpha Phi Omega, and an associate member of the National Society of Scabbard and Blade.

Dr. Harnwell is President of The West Philadelphia Corporation and serves on the Executive Committee of the American Council on Education and the board of managers of The Franklin Institute; is chairman of the Executive Committee of the Greater Philadelphia Movement; a member of the board of directors of The Pennsylvania Railroad, the Philco Corporation, and PENJERDEL; a member of the board of trustees of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; and is a member of the board of trustees of the United Fund of the Philadelphia Area.

12/9/60