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Buechner
Head
Physics*

Appointment of Dr. William W. Buechner as head of the Department of Physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology was announced by Dr. George R. Harrison, dean of the School of Science. He succeeds Dr. N. H. Frank who has resigned to undertake special duties studying undergraduate science subjects with the object of improving teaching effectiveness.

The assignment Dr. Frank is accepting is a new one at M.I.T. He will assist departments in utilizing new developments that are coming from the Science Teaching Center, directed by Professor Francis L. Friedman. He will also assist in the area of the mutual interactions of the teaching of science and engineering.

"Professor Frank will bring special emphasis to bear, on behalf of the Institute, on the utilization of the results of research in teaching, to which he has contributed so much, in the same manner that research results in other fields are being applied," Dean Harrison said.

Dr. Frank was born in Boston and received the degrees of bachelor of science, in 1923, and doctor of science, in 1927, from M.I.T. He joined the Institute staff in 1923, was appointed assistant professor of physics in 1930, associate professor in 1937, and professor in 1944. He was executive officer of the department of physics from 1949-1951, acting head in 1951, and head since 1952.

During World War II he served as a staff member of the M.I.T. Radiation Laboratory, and then as Expert Consultant in the Office of the Secretary of War in Washington. An authority on the fields of theoretical physics and metallic conduction, he is the author of two introductory texts in physics and co-author of an "Introduction to Theoretical Physics."

Dr. Frank is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Physical Society, a member of the Association of Physics Teachers, the American Society for Engineering Education, and an honorary member of Sigma Pi Sigma. He makes his home in Brookline, Mass.

Dr. Buechner, who has an extensive background of experience in teaching, research, and administration at M.I.T., has served as acting head of the department during the past year.

Born in Vallejo, Calif., in 1914, Dr. Buechner received his bachelor of science degree in physics at M.I.T. in 1935, and his Ph.D. degree there in 1939. He has been on the staff in the Physics Department since 1935, was appointed assistant professor in 1942, associate professor in 1951, and professor in 1956. He was associated for many years, both as a student and colleague, with Dr. Robert J. Van de Graaff and he played an important role in the development of the Van de Graaff generator and its associated ion sources. The author of some 50 papers on various aspects of nuclear physics, he also has been concerned with engineering applications of electrostatic generators.

He was associate director of the High Voltage Laboratory which was awarded the Naval Ordnance Development Award during World War II, and he was one of four to receive a certificate for distinguished service. He was appointed director of the M.I.T. - ONR electrostatic generator when it was established in 1951 -- the largest such generator at M.I.T. In 1949 he was awarded the Charles B. Dudley Medal of the American Society of Testing Engineers. He is a director of the High Voltage Engineering Corporation, a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Physical Society, a member of the Association of Physics Teachers, and of Sigma Xi. In 1952 he was appointed "Profesor Extraordinario" of the National University of Mexico and was awarded the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa by that University in 1954. He is a resident of Arlington.