

GEORGE HERBERT HITCHINGS

The capsulated description in Who's Who of George Herbert Hitchings as "a retired chemical company executive" could scarcely be more inadequate for one of whom it has been said, more knowledgeably, that "he has revolutionized the field of development of drugs on a scientific basis."

A native of Washington state, with degrees from the University of Washington and from Harvard, Dr. Hitchings taught for some years and then, in 1942, joined the Burroughs Wellcome Company as a biochemist, a move which brought him, with that company, to North Carolina in 1970. In the course of time he became Research Director of the Chemotherapy division and, in 1967, Vice-President in Charge of Research, a position he held until his official retirement in 1975. Throughout all this time, and indeed in six different decades (late 'twenties to early 'eighties), he published, alone or in collaboration, the staggering total of one hundred ninety-eight articles and thirty-five book chapters. Even more impressive than the quantity of his published research, however, is its quality: seven important drugs in current use were discovered and developed by Dr. Hitchings and his colleagues (especially Dr. Gertrude Elion): drugs used, for example, in the treatment of malaria, gout, and leukemia. In recent years he has been active also in the establishment of programs for medical research, in national and international pharmacological affairs, and in local philanthropic efforts in Durham, where he lives. He has also served the University here as Walter H. Hartung Memorial Lecturer and as Adjunct Professor of Pharmacology from 1972 to 1977.

Recipient of many scientific awards and honorary memberships, abroad from Prague to Edinburgh (including being a Foreign Member of the Royal Society of London) and in this country from election to the National Academy of Sciences to the North Carolina Governor's Award, Dr. Hitchings is a scientist, statesman of science, and humanitarian whom this University delights to recognize.