

# Vanderbilt Gazette



Vol. 3, No. 4  
Nov. 27, 1963

Issued by OFFICE OF INFORMATION & PUBLICATIONS, VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

NASHVILLE, TENN.

## University Establishes Two Departments in Biological Sciences

● Chancellor Heard announces to the University today the establishment of two departments for the biological sciences within the College and the Graduate School. One is a new Department of Molecular Biology, with Professor Oscar Touster as Chairman. The other is to be titled the Department of General Biology, with Associate Professor Robert B. Channell as Chairman.

The changes are effective immediately.

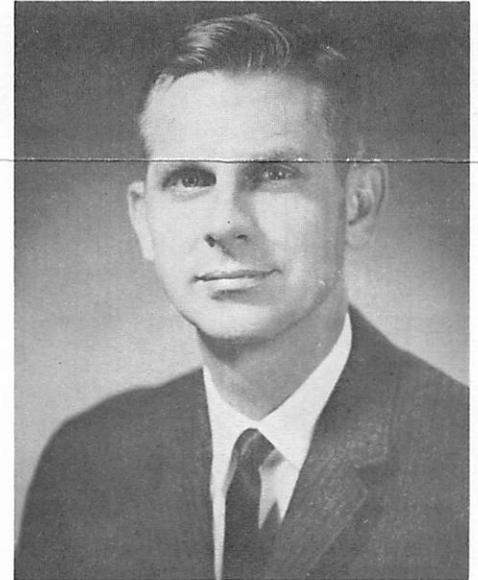
Dr. Touster retains his title of Professor of Biochemistry and continues to hold an appointment in that department of the School of Medicine. His full attention, however, will be given to developing Vanderbilt's resources in molecular biology within the College and the Graduate School. The new department is charged with responsibility for (a) an undergraduate curriculum of sufficient breadth and depth to constitute a field of concentration in the Bachelor of Arts degree, (b) a graduate curriculum and research training program through the Ph.D. level, and (c) faculty research programs contributing to growth in knowledge.

The central emphasis of the Department of Molecular Biology will be on the cellular and sub-cellular aspects of biology, including genetics, biochemistry, microbiology, and cellular physiology as primary fields. The department will be the central agency of the College for these specific fields, and under the standard procedures of the College and the Graduate School will be responsible for new staff appointments and curricular developments in them. The department will also be free to make appointments in biophysics, photobiology, or other closely related fields, to the extent that these contribute to the general objectives of a molecular biology program.

For the fulfillment of these objectives, a full-time faculty of ten is authorized. Joining Dr. Touster at the outset are two members of the former Department of Biology: Dr. Robert J. Neff, a cellular physiologist, as Associate Professor of Molecular Biology; and Dr. Herbert Wiesmeyer, a microbiologist, as Assistant Professor of Molecular Biology. Seven new



Oscar Touster



Robert B. Channell

appointments will be made to bring the department to its authorized strength. One of the major new appointments will be a geneticist to succeed Dr. August H. Doermann, who has accepted a professorship in genetics at the University of Washington, Seattle, after the current academic year.

Departmental offices for Molecular Biology are on the sixth floor of Learned, and research laboratories are also in that building. Teaching laboratories are on the third floor of Buttrick. Additional space for the department will become available in Learned when the Physical Science Center, now under construction, is completed.

● The Department of General Biology will have instructional and research responsibilities in the broad aspects of biology that focus on whole organisms, including physiological, ecological, embryological, morphological, and systematic considerations in botany and zoology.

Members of the department in addition to Dr. Channell at present are Professor Emeritus Warren McAllister Deacon and

Professor Frederick Taylor Wolf; Associate Professors Charles E. Farrell, James J. Friauf, Ilda McVeigh, and Elsie Quarterman; Assistant Professors David A. Nunnally and Howard F. L. Rock. Two additional appointments are authorized presently, one in cytology as it relates to the purposes of the department. Offices and laboratories are in Buttrick.

● Dr. Touster, 42, was born in New York City and earned his degrees at College of the City of New York (B.S. 1941), Oberlin (M.A. 1942), and the University of Illinois (Ph.D. 1947).

He joined the Biochemistry Department of the Vanderbilt School of Medicine as an instructor in 1947, and was promoted to assistant professor in 1950, to associate professor in 1954, and to professor in 1958.

In 1956 he won the Theobald Smith Award of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, given annually to a U. S. medical scientist under the age of 35 whose research is characterized by "independence of thought and originality." He had solved the genetic puzzle called

pentosuria—abnormal accumulation of rare pentose sugar in the body—by discovering an enzyme which, in the liver of normal individuals, enables them to metabolize this sugar.

He spent the 1957-58 year abroad, mostly at Oxford University, under a Guggenheim Fellowship.

Dr. Touster is currently a member of the Organizing Committee for the 6th International Congress of Biochemistry (New York 1964), a member of the Biochemistry Training Committee of the National Institutes of Health, and Secretary for the Medical Sciences Section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, was president last year of the Vanderbilt chapter of Sigma Xi, and is serving as chairman of the Vanderbilt

#### Planning Study's Committee on Interdisciplinary Relations.

● Dr. Channell, 39, was born in Gallman, Mississippi. He earned his B.S. in botany at Mississippi State in 1947, added his M.S. in 1949, and was Instructor in Botany there from 1949 to 1951. He then went to Duke for his Ph.D., which he received in 1955. The next two years were spent at Harvard as a botanist on the staff of the Gray Herbarium-Arnold Arboretum, engaged in research concerning the flora of the Southeastern U.S.

He joined the Vanderbilt faculty as Assistant Professor of Biology in 1957 and was promoted to Associate Professor in 1962. For several summers he taught ma-

rine botany at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, Ocean Springs, Mississippi. In the summer of 1962 he directed Vanderbilt's Institute in Plant Evolution for college teachers of botany, financed by the National Science Foundation. Currently he is directing Vanderbilt's graduate training program in plant evolution, provided under the National Defense Education Act, and also is director of a research project in which Vanderbilt botanists, simultaneously with botanists at Kyushu University in Japan, are making comparative studies of the evolutionary and migrational history of the genus *Trillium*.

He is a member of the Faculty Council of the College of Arts and Science, and serves on the Vanderbilt Planning Study's Committee on Graduate and Postgraduate Studies.