

MEDALIST FOR 1950

For outstanding leadership in aeronautical research and fundamental contributions to aeronautical science.



HUGH LATIMER DRYDEN

Hardly a phase of the rapidly developing flight sciences exists which has not been materially shaped and enhanced by the research and administrative career of Hugh Latimer Dryden.

Born July 2, 1898, at Pocomoke City, Maryland, he earned his way through The Johns Hopkins University. Greatly influenced by Dr. Joseph S. Ames, one of the pioneers in aerodynamics, he did his graduate work in physics, receiving his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins in 1919.

At the age of 21, Dryden was named Chief of the Aerodynamics Section of the Bureau of Standards. In 1924, with L. J. Briggs, he made some of the earliest measurements of the aerodynamic characteristics of airfoils near the speed of sound. Five years later, with A. M. Kuethe, he published the first of a series of important papers on the measurement of turbulence.

In 1934 he was made chief of the Mechanics and Sound division of the Bureau of Standards, and in January 1946 Assistant Director of the Bureau. In the same year he was promoted to Associate Director. During the second World War he was charged with guiding development of Bat, the radar-homing missile used by the Navy against the Japanese. He also served on committees dealing with guided missiles under the sponsorship of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the NACA, the Ordnance Department of the Army, and the Army Air Forces. After the war he continued to take an important part in the missile development program of the Bureau of Standards.

In September 1947, after more than 29 years of service there, Dryden left the Bureau of Standards to become Director of Aeronautical Research of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics. In 1949 his responsibilities were again increased: he became Director of NACA.

Daniel Guggenheim Medal

The launching of Sputnik I by the Soviet Union on October 4, 1957, led to intensive consideration of the objectives of the United States in the exploration and exploitation of space, and of the form of organization required to realize these objectives. On July 29, 1958, the National Aeronautics and Space Act established a new civilian agency, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, terminating NACA and transferring its functions to the new agency. Dryden was named Deputy Administrator of NASA by President Eisenhower and continued to serve in this capacity under President Kennedy.

In addition to his other duties, Dryden served as a member of many scientific committees advising government agencies, including the Department of Defense and the military services. He was adviser to the Science Advisory Committee to the President, a member of the Standing Committee of the Federal Council on Science and Technology, a member of the Defense Science Board, Technical Adviser to the U.S. Representative on the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and national delegate to the NATO Advisory Group for Aeronautical Research and Development. He died December 2, 1965.