



PAUL B. SEARS, EMINENT ECOLOGIST—1965

Paul B. Sears was born in Bucyrus, Ohio, on December 17, 1891. He received his B.S. degree from Ohio Wesleyan in 1913, his M.A. in 1915 from the University of Nebraska, and his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1922.

In 1915 he began his teaching career in botany at Ohio State University, going on leave in 1917 to serve with the United States Army in World War I. From 1919 to 1927, he taught at the University of Nebraska and then moved to the University of Oklahoma where he served as professor of botany and head of the department until 1938. From 1938 until 1950 he was professor of botany and department chairman at Oberlin College. In 1950 Dr. Sears went to Yale, where he served as chairman of the Plant Science Department in 1953–1954; as chairman of the Yale Nature Preserve; and as professor of conservation and chairman of Yale's conservation program until his retirement. Since 1960, he has been a visiting professor at several colleges and universities.

Fundamentally a botanist, his special concentration in plant ecology developed into an interest in the relationships between plants and human beings, and thence into an interest in conservation. Some of his early work in Ohio concerned the changes in the native flora of that region with the coming of the white man. A deep interest in human ecology developed from this research, and his work in Oklahoma during dust bowl days furthered his concern with conservation prob-

lems, particularly those related to agriculture. His book, *Deserts on the March*, stems from this period. Among his other popular books are *This Is Our World; Life and Environment; Charles Darwin, The Naturalist as a Cultural Force*; and *Where There Is Life*. He is also the author of many articles in such magazines as *Harper's, American Scholar, American Mercury, Scientific Monthly, Saturday Review, New Republic, Daedalus*, and *Science*.

Dr. Sears' career in research has been a distinguished one; and he has written many technical papers. He was a pioneer in the study of fossil pollen in America and developed new techniques in the boring of peat bogs, making many contributions to the knowledge of post-glacial climatic and vegetational changes. In his work in the Southwest, he advanced knowledge of ancient forms of maize and of the Pleistocene climate of the area. This specialized information he has correlated with the development of human culture in the same region.

In 1956 Dr. Sears served as president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and later as chairman of its Board of Directors. He was chairman of the Board of the National Audubon Society from 1956-59, and in 1956 served as National Sigma Xi Lecturer. He has received six honorary degrees. His memberships include: Botanical Society of America; Ecological Society (president, 1948); Nebraska, Ohio, and Oklahoma Academies of Science; American Geophysical Union; American Society of Naturalists (president, 1959); Association of American Geographers; American Scholar Board; and National Science Board (1958-64).

He is married to the former Miss Marjorie Lea McCutcheon and has three children: Paul M. Sears, Center for Atmospheric Research, Colorado; Dr. Catherine S. Frazer, Lakewood, Colorado, formerly a member of the Wellsley College faculty; Sallie H. Sears, Assistant Professor of English, Stony Brook Branch of the University of the State of New York.

Dr. Paul B. Sears is recognized for his many contributions to ecology and to conservation; we salute and applaud you as teacher, writer, spokesman for biologists in general and for ecologists in particular; we appreciate you as statesman *par excellent*, especially for your long-time attention to the importance of improving our understanding of the mutual relationships between science and human affairs. We agree with you when you said - "Failure to use Science as a source of perspective in our present stage of culture degrades its function and may in time be disastrous."

We are especially impressed by these words of yours - "As a touchstone to test the effectiveness (of a scientific education), I would suggest the final ability to read and enjoy the landscape. While there is life there is hope, but only for the enlightened."

The Ecological Society of America is proud to bestow the title, Eminent Ecologist, to a scientist of stature and international renown - Dr. Paul Bigelow Sears.

