



Dr. Jerry S. Olson, second from right, receives the George Mercer Award for 1958 from Dr. Alvin M. Weinberg, Director of Oak Ridge National Laboratory. On the left are Dr. S. I. Auerbach, Head of Ecological Research, and Dr. K. Z. Morgan, Director of the Health Physics Division, and E. G. Struxness of the Health Physics Division.

THE GEORGE MERCER AWARD FOR 1958

The George Mercer Award for 1958 has been presented to **Dr. Jerry S. Olson** of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. His paper on "Rates of succession and soil changes on southern Lake Michigan sand dunes", (*Botanical Gazette* 119:125-170) was selected by the Mercer Award Scrutineers as the outstanding paper for 1958.

Jerry Olson received his degrees from the University of Chicago: Ph.B. in the College, 1947; B.S. and M.S. in Geology, 1948 and 1949; and Ph.D. in Botany in 1951. He states that his interest in the field of ecology has roots going back to a fascination with nature stemming from encouragement by his parents, by the late

naturalist, Orpheus Moyer Schantz, by his teachers at Riverside, Illinois and by access to the nearby Forest Preserves of Cook County and to Chicago's Museums. The books of Donald Culross Peattie and the enthusiastic instruction at the Morton Arboretum on "reading the landscape" by May Theilgaard Watts helped him to settle on ecology as a field. He credits the outstanding professors at the University of Chicago for their contribution to his knowledge in a wide variety of subjects which are basic to organizing and extending our knowledge of ecological systems.

Field trips with Charles Olmsted's ecology class and J Harlen Bretz's geology class, together with the rapid developments in post glacial geology which emerged from radiocarbon dating, led to his attempt to work out a time scale for Cowle's and Fuller's classic sand dune succession. A semester spent with Hans Jenny and others in the Division of Soils and Plant Nutrition at Berkeley in 1950 aided the planning and analysis of the resulting study on soil-plant relations.

Jerry has also spent a year with the Committee on Statistics at Chicago, and approximately 6 years with the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. In the latter position, he was engaged in experimental ecology primarily with the eastern hemlock, *Tsuga canadensis*. In 1958, he accepted an appointment as Geobotanist in the Ecology Section, Health Physics Division of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. His primary research interests here include the development of quantitative description of changing ecological systems and the movement of substances between plants and soils.