

In Memory of Professor Albert Szent-Györgyi

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In paying tribute to Albert Szent-Györgyi, one can call on a wealth of recorded observation. The main details are well known and others are documented. Albert was a regular participant at the Sanibel conference; this tribute stems from that special relationship.

Since my days as a graduate student in the late 1930s I recall Szent-Györgyi as a teacher, although not in the classroom but through scientific literature. I know that numerous others have likewise perceived Albert as one of their most remembered non-classroom teachers.

The extent of this teaching relationship was emphasized for me on a global scale while in China for the month of October. Visiting a number of institutes in Beijing and Shanghai, I found quotations in (only) two of the entrance foyers. One of these was translated for me from the Chinese by my host. I could neither translate it nor transcribe the rapid translation I heard. The other was another mural quotation of Szent-Györgyi also, but in English, "Research is to see what everyone else has seen and to think what no one else has thought."

Szent-Györgyi's influence reached far. His warm human qualities are illustrated by a personal quotation of what he said to Mrs. Fox and me outside a meeting room. We three spotted the lovely Mrs. (Marcia) Szent-Györgyi approaching in the corridor. Albert said, "There is the best discovery I ever made."

Szent-Györgyi's contributions to, and suggestions in, science were marked by the outstanding ability to reduce concepts to simple terms. He was unmatched in his ability to place his feet in one area of science, and to look elsewhere, see what few others have seen, and "to think what no one else has thought."

It is painful to say goodbye to Albert Szent-Györgyi. The pain is however alloyed with joy when we recall that we are all better off for the fact that this "man of the century" lived in our time.