

## Robert B. Platt, President 1972-73

society president



Our new president, Robert B. Platt, is Professor of Biology and Director of the Multidisciplinary Program in Ecology at Emory University where he has been since 1948. He was born on January 19, 1913, in Knoxville, Tennessee, the son of a Methodist minister. In 1933 he earned a BS degree in civil engineering at Emory and Henry College, and then, changing to biology, earned a Masters degree at Peabody College in 1936 under Tennessee's naturalist and botanist, the late Jesse N. Shaver. This was followed by high school teaching in Kentucky and Virginia, a year at Armstrong Junior College in Savannah, Georgia and a year at Radford College, Radford, Virginia. After four years as a naval gunnery officer during World War II he was admitted to a doctoral program in botany at the University of Pennsylvania (PhD, 1948). Here, he was privileged to study under Edgar T. Wherry in ecology; David R. Goddard in Physiology and John M. Fogg, Jr. in systematics. His doctoral thesis, published as a monograph on the

ecology of the mid-Appalachian Mountain shale barrens, won him the George Mercer Award of ESA and a Sigma XI Research Award from Emory University.

Platt's teaching and research interests have been primarily in the nature and quality of man's natural environment and in the physiological adaptations of plants and animals to this environment. In recognition of man's increasing use of atomic energy much of his work has been on the role of ionizing radiation in the natural environment. These interests have led to an active participation in administration, teaching and research relating to the evaluation and use of man's renewable natural resources. His original contributions in these areas have appeared in some eighty scientific papers and he is a senior author of two books, one dealing with environmental measurement and interpretation and the other an ecologically oriented text in biology.

Platt held a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1959 for study in several European laboratories and a visiting professorship at UCLA in 1966. He is an honorary member of Phi Beta Kappa and has been twice named an outstanding Educator of America. He is a charter member of his Alma Mater's recently established Sports Hall of Fame and a member of the Board of Sponsors of the Atlanta School of Art. In 1972 he received the 11th annual Thomas Jefferson Award, Emory University's highest award for a faculty member.

Our president has served on many committees and panels with the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Atomic Energy Commission, the National Academy of Sciences and the American Institute of Biological Sciences where he is currently a Member-at-Large on the Governing Board. He is also active in state and national conservation organizations.

His primary society activities have been with the Ecological Society of America, where he has had major roles in many areas, including participation in various committees, an associate editorship of Ecological Monographs, and the vice-presidency in 1968-69.