

1972

Dr. Thomas S. Austin

Class of 1938



Dr. Thomas Austin had a life-long devotion to oceanography. He launched his career in 1939 as a chemist with the State Fish and Game Commission in New York, his home state.

During World War II, he taught electronics at the Grove City College Naval Training School. In 1946, he joined the U.S. government as head of the Oceanic Survey Branch in Washington, D.C., progressing through various positions in Honolulu, Miami and back to Washington, where he was director of Environmental Data Service in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

He was named in 1969 as the Outstanding Federal Handicapped Employee of the U.S. Navy. Active in civic and community affairs, he was president of various citizens' associations in Silver Spring, Md., and Miami, Fla. This winner was designated "Honorary Citizen" with plaques by mayors of Florida's Dade County, Miami and Miami Beach. He was chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Committee for the Greater Miami Area.

Austin wrote more than 33 technical and scientific publications, was an active member of many professional organizations and represented the United States at oceanographic commissions in Geneva, Paris, Rome, Copenhagen and Helsinki.

In 1980, Austin accepted the President's Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service, the highest honor accorded to civilian federal employees. This recognized him as a world authority on marine science and a shaper of national and international policies in marine science and environmental information management.

He passed away Aug. 15, 1994.

Additional degrees: M.A., University of Buffalo; M.S., Yale University; Honorary Doctor of Science, Grove City College