



The Virginia Academy of Science  
Ivey F. Lewis  
Distinguished Service Award



**ROBERT DEAN DECKER**

Dedicated leader of the Virginia Junior Academy of Science, loyal servant of the Virginia Academy of Science and the University of Richmond, Robert Dean Decker is an excellent choice to be honored with the Ivey F. Lewis Distinguished Service Award of the Academy. His highly responsible devotion to the science education of the young is an inspiration to all.

Dr. Decker, a native of Indiana, is Associate Professor of Biology at the University of Richmond. He attended secondary school in Indiana, received his BS and MS degrees from Purdue University and Ph. D. degree from North Carolina State University in 1966 in Botany. He has been teaching plant physiology and introductory biology. He recently developed highly innovative introductory biology courses for non-majors and his most recent research efforts have been in the development of curricula and teaching strategies for these courses. In this regard he is quite active in the state and nationally.

Dean has been Director of the Virginia Junior Academy of Science since 1981. Under his dynamic leadership the VJAS has not only tripled in size but also has experienced great increase in activity and quality. The VJAS now is one of the top Junior academies in the country. His tireless efforts in fund raising have brought significant support to the VJAS. He has been particularly effective in the establishment of college scholarships which are awarded to winners of the research competitions at the annual meeting. Dr. Decker is an expert in the establishment and development of state junior academies and is regularly called upon to present workshops and technical advice.

Dean has been involved with the leadership of the American Junior Academy of Science since 1982. His activities have included serving as a photographer and as assistant to the Director, Dallas Cocke. When Mrs. Cocke became ill, Dean became Acting Director of the AJAS until his appointment as Director. In this capacity he has been most successful in setting up the Annual Meetings of the AJAS and serving as an expert advisor to directors of state Junior academies. These efforts have been recognized and he was honored with the Distinguished Service Award of the National Association of Academies of Science in 1988. Dean also finds time to be involved in other areas of the Virginia Academy of Science. In addition to being a member of the Executive Council and Council of the VAS he has been active and effective as a member of several other committees over the years. For his many contributions the Academy wisely chose to honor him as a Fellow of the Academy in 1983.

It therefore seems most appropriate in this year of the 50th Anniversary of the Virginia Junior Academy of Science to present the Ivey F. Lewis Award to Robert Dean Decker, an outstanding member of the Academy.