Distinguished chemist, dedicated teacher, and staunch supporter of the Virginia Academy of Science, Harold Morton Bell is representative of the best traditions of the Academy. In honoring him with the Ivey F. Lewis Distinguished Service Award, the Academy simply recognizes a devotion to its ideals that is deeply felt by every member of our organization.
A native of Monticello, Kentucky, Dr. Bell was graduated from Eastern Kentucky University in 1960 with the degree of Bachelor of Science. He undertook his graduate work at Purdue University receiving the Ph.D. degree in chemistry in 1964. He worked briefly for the U.S. Army before coming to the Department of Chemistry at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, where he has served throughout his career.

In his professional capacity Dr. Bell has specialized in the chemical reactions of the metal hydrides. He has pioneered in the application of nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy and computer techniques to problems of chemical analysis. He has published numerous papers on these subjects in such professional organs as the Journal of the American Chemical Society and the Journal of Organic Chemistry.

Dr. Bell has spent much of his energy in improving the quality of education in his home institution. His contributions have been recognized by the award of the VPI & SU Certificate of Teaching Excellence in 1979 and the Nan F. Clifford Service Award of the Department of Chemistry in 1985. His papers in the Journal of Chemical Education attest to his interest in applying his expertise in NMR and computer analysis to the classroom.

Ever since his arrival at VPI & SU Dr. Bell has taken an active interest in the Virginia Academy. He has held all the offices in the Chemistry Section, Secretary, Councilor, and Chairman. He has served on numerous committees, among them the Junior Academy Committee, the Membership Committee, the Committee on the Science Museum of Virginia, and the Nominations and Elections Committee. He has held our highest office as President in 1982-1983.

With all these, his greatest service to the Academy has yet to be mentioned: his long and persevering tours of duty as the Director of the Visiting Scientist Program from 1979 to 1982 and from 1985 to 1992. In this office, largely out of sight of the majority of Academy members, Dr. Bell has worked tirelessly to collect and publish lists of topics and speakers from Virginia’s Colleges and Universities. The lists are distributed to science supervisors and teachers in order to bring the expertise and enthusiasm of working scientists to the high schools of the Commonwealth. As those who are familiar with the program will realize, the work is always a struggle against the logistical problems of getting the right information to the right people at the right time, and often a battle against the apathy of overloaded teachers and administrators.

In recognition of his long, dedicated, and fruitful service to the Virginia Academy of Science and to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Academy hereby awards to Harold Morton Bell the Ivey F. Lewis Distinguished Service Award for 1993.