



National Center for
Atmospheric Research

Information Release

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John W. Firor Named NCAR Director

Boulder, Colo.---Dr. John W. Firor has been named director of the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder, Colorado. Dr. Firor has served with NCAR since 1961 as associate director and director of its High Altitude Observatory.

Dr. Firor's appointment was made by the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR), with the approval of the director of the National Science Foundation. UCAR is the nonprofit corporation of 24 U.S. universities that operates NCAR under contract with the National Science Foundation.

Dr. Firor succeeds Dr. Walter Orr Roberts, who was appointed NCAR's first director when the center was created in 1960. Dr. Roberts will now serve full time as president and chief executive officer of the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research, an appointment that he formerly held concurrently with his post as director of NCAR.

Commenting on Dr. Firor's appointment, Dr. Roberts said: "John Firor has outstanding qualities for scientific leadership at NCAR. I have long anticipated the day when I could turn over direction of NCAR to a scientist in whom our staff and the scientific world will have full confidence. The day has now arrived. It is a matter of great gratification to me to be able to turn my own major efforts towards the broader problems of the advancement of atmospheric science, and in particular to the promotion of new programs of atmospheric research in the universities of this country and the world."

Dr. Leland J. Haworth, director of the National Science Foundation, said of the action: "The appointment of Dr. Firor will insure that NCAR continues to be a dynamic, high-quality research institution. Under Walt Roberts, NCAR developed into a position of leadership in research in the many difficult and challenging areas of the atmospheric sciences. We are delighted that Dr. Firor has accepted the post as his successor, and we

expect that NCAR's activities, many of which are related to such major social problems as weather control and air pollution, will continue undiminished in quality and vigor."

Dr. A. Richard Kassander, chairman of the UCAR Board of Trustees and director of the Institute of Atmospheric Physics of the University of Arizona, said: "The corporation has recognized for some time the growing need for a full-time chief executive. Establishing the directorship of NCAR as a separate position, distinct from the UCAR presidency, will enable the corporation to make the most of opportunities for advancement of the atmospheric sciences, both through operation of NCAR and through closer cooperation with university atmospheric science programs and with national and international efforts in atmospheric research."

Firor, a native of Georgia, attended elementary school in Athens, Georgia, and high school in Denver, Colorado. He graduated from the Georgia Institute of Technology in 1949 with a B.S. in physics, and earned the Ph.D. in physics from the University of Chicago in 1954.

Before joining NCAR, he was a staff member of the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism of the Carnegie Institution of Washington for eight years. Since 1962, he has been a professor-adjoint of astrophysics on the faculty of the University of Colorado.

Firor's personal research interests include the effects of the earth's atmosphere and magnetic field on cosmic rays; radio astronomy, especially radio waves from the sun; infrared emission from the solar corona; and atmospheric and space research in general.

Firor is a member of the American Astronomical Society, the International Astronomical Union, Sigma Xi, and the American Geophysical Union. He is also a member of the U.S. committee for the Global Atmospheric Research Program, the Astronomy Missions Board of NASA, and chairman of the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Data Interchange and Data Centers.

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