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MEYER W. WEISGAL

Meyer W. Weisgal, 82, Chancellor, former President and principal architect of the Weizmann Institute of Science and Chairman of the Board of Yad Chaim Weizmann, died yesterday, after a long illness, at _____, thus bringing to an end a notable career that spanned three continents, bridged the worlds of journalism, drama, literature and science, and was studded with contributions to the creation of the State of Israel and its development.

Born in Poland, Weisgal came to the United States as a boy, studied journalism at Columbia University, and served in the U.S. Army in World War I. His long association with the Zionist Organization of America began in 1915 and continued until 1930. During this period he edited a number of leading Zionist publications including The Maccabean, subsequently converted into The New Palestine, which, under his editorship, became the outstanding Jewish publication in the United States.

From 1921 to 1930, he served as National Secretary of the Zionist Organization of America, and in the great schism of 1921 that split the American Zionist Movement, he fought on the side of Louis Lipsky and Chaim Weizmann, with whom he established relationships that endured throughout their lifetimes.

In 1933, he turned his remarkable exuberance and drive towards a larger stage; he conceived and directed first "The Romance of a People" at the Chicago World's Fair and in New York, and then in 1937 produced "The Eternal Road," a Biblical spectacle that brought together such stellar personalities as Franz Werfel, Max Reinhardt, Kurt Weill and Norman Bel Geddes. In 1939 he climaxed his career as master showman by building and directing the Palestine Pavilion at the New

York World's Fair, which was a national pavilion even though 10 years were to pass before the Jewish State came into existence.

In 1940, Weisgal returned actively to Zionist affairs by becoming Dr. Chaim Weizmann's personal political representative in the United States, and shortly thereafter, was charged also with the task of establishing the American Section of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. In 1943 he was appointed Organizing Secretary of the American Jewish Conference which helped to bring about agreement on the part of all American Jewish organizations, Zionist and non-Zionist, to seek broad support for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine at the end of World War II.

Through his increasingly intimate relationship with Dr. Weizmann, Weisgal became interested in the Daniel Sieff Research Institute which Dr. Weizmann had founded in 1934 in the village of Rehovot on the coastal plain of Palestine; in 1944 he began activities on behalf of the larger multi-disciplinary Weizmann Institute of Science which grew out of the original Sieff Institute and which was conceived as a 70th birthday gift to Dr. Weizmann. Despite the fact that he was neither an educator nor a scientist, in 1949 Mr. Weisgal assumed leadership of the Weizmann Institute, took up residence with his family in Rehovot, and in November 1949 presided over the Institute's formal dedication.

In 1951, Mr. Weisgal took a year's leave of absence from the Weizmann Institute to serve as Vice President of the State of Israel Bond Organization in the United States and organized the successful U. S. visit of Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion which launched the Organization's first drive for \$500 million.

During the subsequent 25 years of his energetic, imaginative and dedicated

service to it, the Weizmann Institute developed from a small initial campus of eight buildings and nine departments into an impressive 75-acre complex whose scientific staff today numbers some 1,500 researchers, engineers and technicians, among them 500 graduate students, currently engaged on close to 400 research projects. In "The Odyssey of an Optimist" published in 1966 on the occasion of Weisgal's 70th birthday, Nobel Laureate Isidor I. Rabi described Weisgal as "one of the great institution builders of our time; an impresario with no first-hand knowledge of science, but with a profound understanding of and deep sensitivity to the scientific spirit; the man who has built one of the great scientific institutions of the world."

A similar tribute was paid to Weisgal by Professor Herman F. Mark of the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute who headed the planning committee which, at Dr. Weizmann's invitation, had directed the expansion of the Sieff Institute into the Weizmann Institute. "... The principles which enabled Meyer Weisgal to become the founder and keeper of one of the great cultural centers of our modern world were rare in themselves and rarer yet when combined: unshakable confidence in the ultimate attainment of his high ideals; deep and benevolent respect for the human qualities of all people; and, above all, a delightful and unextinguishable sense of humor which enabled him to look serenely and philosophically on the flood of human deficiencies which he encountered so often during his career. If some day the question should be asked: 'How can you justify your life, Mr. Weisgal?', then Meyer need not make the reply. The scientists will answer for him. 'He created a fountain from which truth will flow eternally for the benefit of all people of good will.'

From 1949 to 1966 Mr. Weisgal was Chairman of the Institute's Executive Council, and in 1966 he was elected President of the Institute and served until 1970 when he was appointed Chancellor.

In November 1952 Mr. Weisgal was named Chairman of Yad Chaim Weizmann, the National Memorial to Dr. Weizmann created jointly by the Government of Israel, the Jewish Agency and the Weizmann Institute of Science. Among the programs undertaken by Yad Weizmann were the establishment of the Weizmann Archives and the collecting, annotating, editing and publishing of Dr. Weizmann's Letters and Papers, of which Mr. Weisgal was General Editor. By the end of 1977, the greater part of this 23-volume series will have appeared.

His concentrated efforts as fund-raiser par excellence and chief executive of the Weizmann Institute notwithstanding, Mr. Weisgal continued to play a major role on the Jewish cultural and artistic scene both in Israel and abroad. In 1957, at the request of Israel's Prime Minister, he accepted Chairmanship of the World Committee for the Observance of Israel's Tenth Anniversary. His close connection with the arts led him to become Chairman of the Board of Directors of Tel Aviv's Cameri Theatre and the initiator of the Itzik Manger Prize for Yiddish Literature. He also served as editor of "Chaim Weizmann - Statesman, Scientist, Builder of the Jewish Commonwealth" published in 1944 and "Chaim Weizmann, A Biography by Several Hands" published in 1963. In 1972 his own memoirs, entitled "Meyer Weisgal... So Far," were published in the U.S. by Random House, in Great Britain and Israel by Weidenfeld & Nicholson and in Germany by Verlag Ullstein. They were translated into several other languages and enjoyed wide critical and popular acclaim.

Among the honors conferred upon Mr. Weisgal were the Weizmann Institute's first Ph.D. Honoris Causa (1964); an Honorary Doctorate of Brandeis University (1969); an Honorary Doctorate of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1969); the Rothschild Prize for Merit (1969) awarded to him at ceremonies held in the Knesset, Israel's Parliament; the Remembrance Award of the World Federation of Bergen Belsen Associations (1974) and the King Solomon Award of the America-Israel Cultural Foundation (1976).

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Mr. Weisgal is survived by his wife, the former Shirley Hirshfeld of New York and their three children: Emanuel (an actor, producer and director known professionally as Michael Wager), a daughter, Helen Amir (who resides in Israel), David Weisgal, and by seven grandchildren.