WALTER F. SNYDER
Executive Director of the National Sanitation Foundation—1944-1965

Men and women who find careers in the fields of environmental health share certain interests, problems, convictions and aspirations which place them in a professional situation that is decidedly their own. They dedicate their lives to the service of their fellow men. They are deeply committed to the belief that this world, this nation, this state, this district or town can, and must, be made a better, safer place in which to live. They are a realistic amalgam of exact science and boundless optimism, and their zeal is never dimmed.

Walter F. Snyder was one of these people. He learned from his colleagues
and taught others what he learned. Almost everyone who encountered him in a classroom, meeting or conference knew they were in the presence of an evangelist of environmental health. Many who met him realized that this friendly yet outspoken man possessed remarkable powers of insight, organizational creativity and leadership. These gifts, combined with his desire to work with and through people, were ultimately to establish him as a leader among those who seek to attain environmental quality.

For 10 years, he directed the environmental health program for the City of Toledo, Ohio. Even as he worked to improve an urban environment he was extending his own frontiers with graduate work at the University of Toledo as well as the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Through his studies and first-hand observation of events, he was convinced that progress on countless vital problems of public health could best be resolved by bringing representatives of government, industry and user groups together on neutral ground where they could discuss their differences and reconcile their viewpoints.

In 1944, Walter Snyder resigned from his position in Toledo and returned to Ann Arbor. His belief that environmental quality could best be achieved through deliberation, harmony and accord attracted interest and support among highly placed members of the U of M faculty. As a result, the National Sanitation Foundation was established at the School of Public Health in that year. He served as its Executive Director until his death in 1965.

The new Foundation had marked success in providing a mechanism for bringing new standards of sanitation to industry, and in conducting supportive research. Today, the National Sanitation Foundation, an independent, non-profit organization with a large professional staff and testing laboratory of its own, is an ever-widening influence in the field of environmental quality. This influence is due today, as it was in the very beginning, to the principle of inter-group communication and cooperation pioneered by Walter F. Snyder.

The 1971 Walter F. Snyder Award presented to CALLIS H. ATKINS

In September 1965, Callis Atkins—known as Slim to hundreds of colleagues—was honored by the United States government with the Distinguished Service Medal, the highest award that can be conferred upon a member of the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service. He was cited for his contribution to international health through sanitary engineering and for strengthening public programs in environmental health.

As a young graduate in civil engineering, Atkins served with an engineering firm and the North Carolina State Board of Health. He entered the U. S. Public Health Service in 1936 and distinguished himself in a succession of posts: regional engineer for the midwestern states, chief of the former sanitation division in Washington, and adviser in public health engineering to the government of India. Returning to the U.S. he was appointed associate regional health director for environmental health services, and later director of sanitary engineering activities for USPHS in the East Central States, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. From 1962 to 1966, he served as Assistant Surgeon General and Chief Engineer in the Public Health Service.

Slim Atkins retired from the Public Health Service in 1966 and accepted the appointment of Director, Division of Environmental Health, for the World Health Organization. Now his concern for the health of
human beings—once counted in the tens of millions—was numbered in the billions.

He was faced with the diverse environmental problems of populations in every habitable area of the Earth; community water supply, water pollution and wastes management, special problems of urban health, endless challenges in air pollution and the evolving technology of environmental radiation protection.

In his division he worked to establish international, regional and national reference centers to support research and development in environmental health and provide exchange points for environmental information. One effort in this direction was the establishment of a sanitary engineering center in Rabat, Morocco to train personnel for duty in French-speaking countries.

Callis H. Atkins is a charter member of the Inter-American Society of Sanitary Engineering, a member of the American Society of Sanitary Engineering, a member of the American Public Health Association, the American Water Works Association, the Water Pollution Control Federation, the Conference of State Sanitary Engineers and the Conference of Federal Sanitary Engineers. He is also a Diplomate in the American Academy of Environmental Engineering, Fellow in the American Society of Civil Engineers, a member of the National Society of Professional Engineers and a registered Professional Engineer in the District of Columbia and Virginia.

In searching for the recipient of the first Walter F. Snyder Award, the committee considered many distinguished nominees. On the basis of his thirty-five years of brilliant effort toward attaining environmental quality throughout the world, Callis H. Atkins was selected to receive the Award in 1971.
The Walter F. Snyder Award is presented annually by the National Environmental Health Association and the National Sanitation Foundation to a recipient who has achieved peer recognition for outstanding accomplishment in the field of environment . . . for notable contributions to public health and the quality of life, for demonstrated capacity to work with all interests in solving environmental problems, for knowledge and proficiency in utilizing voluntary standards to obtain environmental objectives, and for leadership in securing action on behalf of environmental goals.

Presented at the Thirty-Fifth Annual Education Conference of the National Environmental Health Association on July First, 1971.