

## **Dr. Bernd T. Matthias died**

**October 28, 1980**

Dr. Bernd T. Matthias, professor of physics at the University of California, San Diego and a world authority on the phenomenon of superconductivity, died yesterday (Monday, October 27) at his home in La Jolla.

Matthias, considered one of the most outstanding physicists of recent times, specialized in the physics of matter at very low temperatures. He was an authority on superconductivity in which many metals, at sufficiently low temperatures, lose all electrical resistance and carry currents with no energy loss. He discovered most of the superconducting materials known today including many of those upon which such new technologies as controlled thermonuclear fusion depend.

He made equally important contributions to understanding the phenomenon of ferroelectricity in which materials exhibit an electrical equivalent of magnetic behavior.

Matthias, 62, was born in Frankfurt on Maine, West Germany. He received his doctorate from the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1943. He joined the UC San Diego faculty as professor of physics in 1961 and had served as director of the Institute of Pure and Applied Physical Science since 1971. He had concurrently been a staff member of the Bell Telephone Laboratory in Murray Hill, New Jersey, since 1948.

UC San Diego Chancellor Richard C. Atkinson called Matthias, "A major figure on this campus and in the world of solid state physics. His contributions to science were extensive and profound and he has left us with a heritage of outstanding achievement."

Matthias worked and taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Chicago before coming to UC San Diego. He was elected to the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1965, was elected Industrial Research man of the year in 1968, and in 1970 received the prestigious Oliver E. Buckley prize in solid state physics. He was awarded an honorary doctor of science degree from the University of Lausanne in 1978 and in 1979 won the American Physical Society International Prize for new materials.

Matthias' laboratory at UC San Diego has been a major center for low temperature research and has attracted as visitors and collaborators many of the most important scientists in this field. Matthias was known especially for having an intuitive grasp of the physics of atomic behavior in solids that led him rapidly to discoveries that would otherwise have been slowly arrived at.

He leaves his wife, Joan, Services have not yet been set.

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