

Nobel winning professor, Dr. Von Bekesy, dies at 73

Dr. Georg von Bekesy, 73, Nobel Prize-winning professor of sensory sciences at the University of Hawaii, died Tuesday.

He won the Nobel Prize in medicine and physiology in 1961 for his study on the human ear and how it responds to sound. He came to the University in 1965 to fill the Hawaiian Telephone Company chair in Sensory Sciences.

The **ACOUSTICAL** Society of America described him in 1961 as "physicist, anatomist, physiologist and experimenter extraordinary." He once told newspaper reporters that he used to work in the laboratory "from early morning to 10 p.m. or later.

"The lab looks like a submarine," he said. "A small place and full of equipment.

"I like a lonely life. If you don't want it, you have more invitations than you can afford to accept. Concentration on one field is possible only if you are lonely to a certain degree.

Dr. Von Bekesy was born in Budapest and received his early education in Munich, Constantinople, Budapest and Zurich. He studied chemistry at the University of Berne and earned a Ph.D. in physics at the University of Budapest.

HE TAUGHT in Budapest and worked in the telephone system's laboratories, specializing in long distance communications until 1946. He also spent a year working at the Central Laboratory of Siemens and Halske A.G. in Berlin, one of the early centers in the development of telecommunication.

He went to the Karolinski Institute in Stockholm in 1946, continuing to experiment there and at the Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden. He left for Harvard University a year later to work in the Psycho-Acoustic Laboratory to develop a mechanical model of the inner ear.



DR. VON BEKESY

Dr. von Bekesy first came to the Islands in 1964 to act as a consultant to the Pacific Biomedical Research Center, and to lecture and conduct seminars at the University. He was appointed to the University faculty the following year.

TWO JAPANESE medical scholars came to Honolulu in 1967 to join him in research concerning animal search concerning animal hearing and the sensory perception of marine animals.

Dr. von Bekesy was the recipient of many prizes, grants and awards. He wrote "Experiments in Hearing" on the basis of 34 years of research. His book and research were highly commended by the Nobel Prize committee.

In his free time, he collected early and primitive art objects, which he hung and displayed in his laboratories.

Dr. von Bekesy once said, "If someone is a scientist, he loves to work on some problem and my hope is to contribute to solving the deafness problem."