

Sidney A. McNairy, Jr., PhD, DSc, LHD

Former Associate Director, National Center Research Resources

Former Director, Center Building Branch, NIGMS



Dr. Sidney A. McNairy, Jr. Dr. McNairy's twenty-five years of exemplary leadership contributed to the development and growth of the Research Centers in Minority Institutes. He championed the idea that researchers in minority and other small and developing institutions can compete with scientists at majority institutions if presented with the same resources and opportunities. Dr. McNairy worked to foster biomedical research environments in minority institutions that have given thousands of researcher's access to scientific and educational resources and ensured that a diverse group of scientists contribute to the biomedical research advances that lead to improved health for all.

An award-winning academician and senior-level federal grants administrator, Dr. McNairy has been the driving force behind other innovative programs at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) such as the Institutional Development Award (IDeA) program, the Animal Facilities Improvement Program (AFIP) and the Research Facilities Improvement Program (RFIP), strengthening the biomedical research infrastructure at emerging and research intensive institutions throughout the nation. He is also a leader in the development of programs that address health disparities and health-related science education for K-12 students and the general public.

Born in Memphis, Tennessee, Dr. McNairy received his B.S. degree in Chemistry from LeMoyne-Owen College in Memphis, and the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in biochemistry from Purdue University, in West Lafayette, Indiana. During his graduate career, he isolated, chemically characterized, and determined the molecular basis of the biological actions of triterpenoid glycosides. He has received numerous awards and honors, including eight honorary doctorate degrees, and was designated an "Old Master" by his alma mater Purdue University. He is a member of the Golden Parade of alumni, the Board of Trustees of LeMoyne-Owen College, an honorary member of the Tuskegee Veterinary Medical Alumni Association and has been designated an "Arkansas Traveler" by the governor of Arkansas.

Prior to joining NIH, Dr. McNairy was a Professor of Chemistry at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He was also a visiting scientist at Charles Pfizer, Eli Lilly, General Electric, Standard Oil of California, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. One of the highlights of his research career was his work as part of the pioneering research team at Eli Lilly that isolated proinsulin, sequenced the insulin connecting polypeptide, and developed a radio-immunological assay for proinsulin.

Dr. Sidney A McNairy is often described by his colleagues as "A Beacon of Light for Biomedical Research in the Nation."