

*Contemporary
Authors*

volume 155

Contemporary Authors®

**A Bio-Bibliographical Guide to
Current Writers in Fiction, General Nonfiction,
Poetry, Journalism, Drama, Motion Pictures,
Television, and Other Fields**

TERRIE M. ROONEY,
Editor

volume 155



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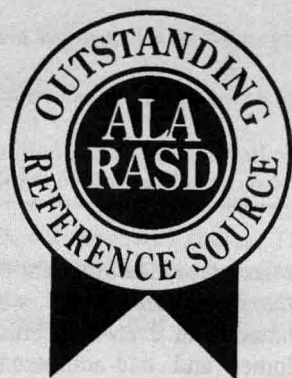
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Contemporary Authors
*was named an
"Outstanding
Reference Source," by
the American Library
Association Reference
and Adult Services
Division after its 1962
inception.
In 1985 it was listed by
the same organization
as one of the
twenty-five most
distinguished reference
titles published in the
past twenty-five years.*

Preface

Contemporary Authors (CA) provides information on approximately 100,000 writers in a wide range of media, including:

- Current writers of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama whose works have been issued by commercial publishers, risk publishers, or university presses (authors whose books have been published only by known vanity or author-subsidized firms are ordinarily not included)
- Prominent print and broadcast journalists, editors, photojournalists, syndicated cartoonists, graphic novelists, screenwriters, television scriptwriters, and other media people
- Authors who write in languages other than English, provided their works have been published in the United States or translated into English
- Literary greats of the early twentieth century whose works are popular in today's high school and college curriculums and continue to elicit critical attention

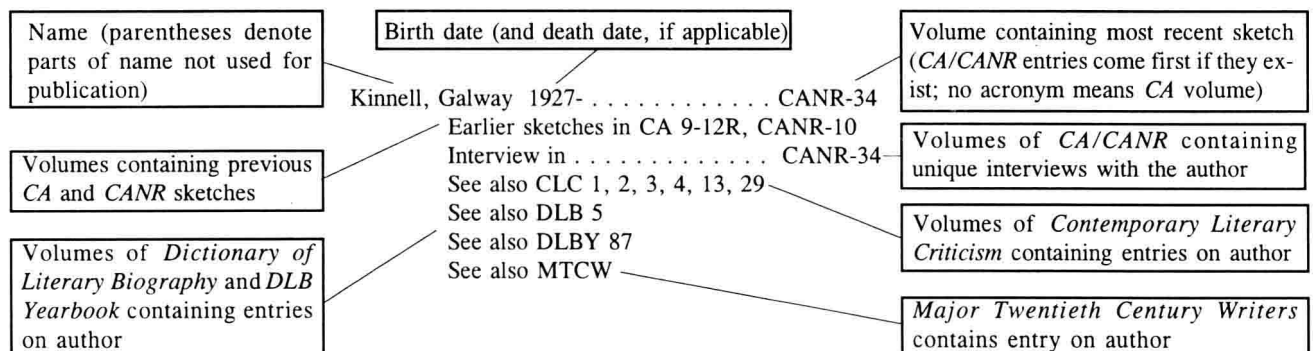
A *CA* listing entails no charge or obligation. Authors are included on the basis of the above criteria and their interest to *CA* users. Sources of potential listees include trade periodicals, publishers' catalogs, librarians, and other users.

How to Get the Most out of *CA*: Use the Index

The key to locating an author's most recent entry is the *CA* cumulative index, which is published separately and distributed with even-numbered original volumes and odd-numbered revision volumes. It provides access to *all* entries in *CA* and *Contemporary Authors New Revision Series (CANR)*. Always consult the latest index to find an author's most recent entry.

For the convenience of users, the *CA* cumulative index also includes references to all entries in these Gale literary series: *Authors and Artists for Young Adults*, *Authors in the News*, *Bestsellers*, *Black Literature Criticism*, *Black Writers*, *Children's Literature Review*, *Concise Dictionary of American Literary Biography*, *Concise Dictionary of British Literary Biography*, *Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series*, *Contemporary Authors Bibliographical Series*, *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, *Dictionary of Literary Biography Documentary Series*, *Dictionary of Literary Biography Yearbook*, *DIScovering Authors*, *DIScovering Authors: British*, *DIScovering Authors: Canadian*, *DIScovering Authors: Modules* (including modules for Dramatists, Most-Studied Authors, Multicultural Authors, Novelists, Poets, and Popular/Genre Authors), *Drama Criticism*, *Hispanic Literature Criticism*, *Hispanic Writers*, *Junior DIScovering Authors*, *Major Authors and Illustrators for Children and Young Adults*, *Major 20th-Century Writers*, *Native North American Literature*, *Poetry Criticism*, *Short Story Criticism*, *Something about the Author*, *Something about the Author Autobiography Series*, *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, *World Literature Criticism*, and *Yesterday's Authors of Books for Children*.

A Sample Index Entry:



How Are Entries Compiled?

The editors make every effort to secure new information directly from the authors; listees' responses to our questionnaires and query letters provide most of the information featured in *CA*. For deceased writers, or those who fail to reply to requests for data, we consult other reliable biographical sources, such as those indexed in Gale's *Biography and Genealogy Master Index*, and bibliographical sources, including *National Union Catalog*, *LC MARC*, and *British National Bibliography*. Further details come from published interviews, feature stories, and book reviews, as well as information supplied by the authors' publishers and agents.

An asterisk () at the end of a sketch indicates that the listing has been compiled from secondary sources believed to be reliable but has not been personally verified for this edition by the author sketched.*

What Kinds of Information Does an Entry Provide?

Sketches in *CA* contain the following biographical and bibliographical information:

- **Entry heading:** the most complete form of author's name, plus any pseudonyms or name variations used for writing
- **Personal information:** author's date and place of birth, family data, ethnicity, educational background, political and religious affiliations, and hobbies and leisure interests
- **Addresses:** author's home, office, or agent's addresses, plus e-mail and fax numbers, as available
- **Career summary:** name of employer, position, and dates held for each career post; resume of other vocational achievements; military service
- **Membership information:** professional, civic, and other association memberships and any official posts held
- **Awards and honors:** military and civic citations, major prizes and nominations, fellowships, grants, and honorary degrees
- **Writings:** a comprehensive, chronological list of titles, publishers, dates of original publication and revised editions, and production information for plays, television scripts, and screenplays
- **Adaptations:** a list of films, plays, and other media which have been adapted from the author's work
- **Work in progress:** current or planned projects, with dates of completion and/or publication, and expected publisher, when known
- **Sidelights:** a biographical portrait of the author's development; information about the critical reception of the author's works; revealing comments, often by the author, on personal interests, aspirations, motivations, and thoughts on writing
- **Biographical and critical sources:** a list of books and periodicals in which additional information on an author's life and/or writings appears

Obituary Notices in *CA* provide date and place of birth as well as death information about authors whose full-length sketches appeared in the series before their deaths. These entries also summarize the authors' careers and writings and list other sources of biographical and death information.

Related Titles in the CA Series

Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series complements *CA* original and revised volumes with specially commissioned autobiographical essays by important current authors, illustrated with personal photographs they provide. Common topics include their motivations for writing, the people and experiences that shaped their careers, the rewards they derive from their work, and their impressions of the current literary scene.

Contemporary Authors Bibliographical Series surveys writings by and about important American authors since World War II. Each volume concentrates on a specific genre and features approximately ten writers; entries list works written by and about the author and contain a bibliographical essay discussing the merits and deficiencies of major critical and scholarly studies in detail.

Available in Electronic Formats

CD-ROM. Full-text bio-bibliographic entries from the entire *CA* series, covering approximately 100,000 writers, are available on CD-ROM through lease and purchase plans. The disc combines entries from the *CA*, *CANR*, and *Contemporary Authors Permanent Series (CAP)* print series to provide the most recent author listing. It can be searched by name, title, subject/genre, nationality/ethnicity, personal data, and as well as advanced searching using boolean logic. The disc is updated every six months. For more information, call 1-800-877-GALE.

Online. The *Contemporary Authors* database is made available online to libraries and their patrons through online public access catalog (OPAC) vendors. Currently, *CA* is offered through Ameritech Library Services' Vista Online (formerly Dynix), and is expected to become available through CARL Systems and The Library Corporation. More OPAC vendor offerings will soon follow.

GaleNet. *CA* is available on a subscription basis through GaleNet, a new online information resource that features an easy-to-use end-user interface, the powerful search capabilities of the BRS/Search retrieval software, and ease of access through the World Wide Web. For more information, call 1-800-877-GALE.

Magnetic Tape. *CA* is available for licensing on magnetic tape in a fielded format. Either the complete database or a custom selection of entries may be ordered. The database is available for internal data processing and nonpublishing purposes only. For more information, call 1-800-877-GALE.

Suggestions Are Welcome

The editors welcome comments and suggestions from users on any aspects of the *CA* series. If readers would like to recommend authors for inclusion in future volumes of the series, they are cordially invited to write: The Editors, *Contemporary Authors*, 835 Penobscot Bldg., 645 Griswold St., Detroit, MI 48226-4094; call toll-free at 1-800-347-GALE; or fax at 1-313-961-6599.

CA Numbering System and Volume Update Chart

Occasionally questions arise about the *CA* numbering system and which volumes, if any, can be discarded. Despite numbers like “29-32R,” “97-100” and “155,” the entire *CA* print series consists of only 138 physical volumes with the publication of *CA* Volume 155. The following charts note changes in the numbering system and cover design, and indicate which volumes are essential for the most complete, up-to-date coverage.

CA First Revision

- 1-4R through 41-44R (11 books)

Cover: Brown with black and gold trim.

There will be no further First Revision volumes because revised entries are now being handled exclusively through the more efficient *New Revision Series* mentioned below.

CA Original Volumes

- 45-48 through 97-100 (14 books)

Cover: Brown with black and gold trim.

- 101 through 155 (55 books)

Cover: Blue and black with orange bands.

The same as previous *CA* original volumes but with a new, simplified numbering system and new cover design.

CA Permanent Series

- *CAP*-1 and *CAP*-2 (2 books)

Cover: Brown with red and gold trim.

There will be no further *Permanent Series* volumes because revised entries are now being handled exclusively through the more efficient *New Revision Series* mentioned below.

CA New Revision Series

- *CANR*-1 through *CANR*-56 (56 books)

Cover: Blue and black with green bands.

Includes only sketches requiring significant changes; **sketches are taken from any previously published *CA*, *CAP*, or *CANR* volume.**

If You Have:

You May Discard:

CA First Revision Volumes 1-4R through 41-44R and CA <i>Permanent Series</i> Volumes 1 and 2	CA Original Volumes 1, 2, 3, 4 Volumes 5-6 through 41-44
CA Original Volumes 45-48 through 97-100 and 101 through 155	NONE: These volumes will not be superseded by corresponding revised volumes. Individual entries from these and all other volumes appearing in the left column of this chart may be revised and included in the various volumes of the <i>New Revision Series</i> .
CA <i>New Revision Series</i> Volumes <i>CANR</i> -1 through <i>CANR</i> -56	NONE: The <i>New Revision Series</i> does not replace any single volume of <i>CA</i> . Instead, volumes of <i>CANR</i> include entries from many previous <i>CA</i> series volumes. All <i>New Revision Series</i> volumes must be retained for full coverage.

A Sampling of Authors and Media People Featured in This Volume

Innokenty Annensky

Esteemed Russian Acmeist poet and playwright Annensky won acclaim for critical essays and poems. *Kiparisovy larets*, his most popular book of verse, is replete with “flawlessly perfect jewels” of poetry.

Gertrude Atherton

A prolific 19th-century novelist and short-story writer, Atherton’s life and writings, including *Patience Sparhawk and Her Times*, helped to define women’s capacity for roles beyond those of wife and mother.

Isaak Babel

A Jew who witnessed pogroms yet fought with Cossacks to gain the understanding necessary to a writer, Babel is the author of masterful, philosophically complex stories rich in the culture of Czarist and revolutionary Russia.

Stella Benson

English-born suffragette and novelist Stella Benson’s life was nearly as colorful as those of her erudite, independent young heroines, who face gender and culture conflicts in her vividly detailed novels, including *I Pose* and *The Poor Man*.

Margery Bianco

Best known as Margery Williams, the author of classics *The Velveteen Rabbit; or, How Toys Become Real* and *The Skin Horse*, Bianco began her career as a novelist for adult readers and authored many other books for children.

George Washington Cable

Celebrated in his time for his entertaining novels, Cable’s realistic portrayals of the lives and language of people of color in novels and essays were among the first in America to insist on the equality of African Americans.

Fran Drescher

Film and television comedienne Drescher, star of the popular television sitcom *The Nanny*, serves up generous helpings of autobiography, photographs, and humor in her chatty memoir *Enter Whining*.

Olivia Goldsmith

In hit novels, including *The First Wives’ Club* and *The Bestseller*, Goldsmith portrays women caught in a ruthless society, from divorcees dumped for “trophy wives” to novelists vying for spots on the bestseller list.

Wassily Kandinsky

The father of abstract art, Kandinsky was also an accomplished prose poet and essayist who detailed his views about painting and life in such volumes as *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* and *Sounds*.

Evelyn Lau

In acclaimed works of fiction and poetry, including *Fresh Girls, and Other Stories*, Lau, the youngest nominee for Canada’s Governor General’s prize, details the brutality and moral ambiguity of life in the demimonde.

Gwendolyn M. Parker

A delicately handled tale of racism and responsibility, Parker’s novel *These Same Long Bones* draws a detailed picture of a black North Carolina community in the era preceeding the civil rights movement.

Anthony Quinn

Actor, director, and writer Quinn is known for his capable portrayal of ethnic characters. He has earned two Academy Awards and was nominated for three others, including his fiery characterization of the title role in *Zorba the Greek*.

Dennis Rodman

Star forward for the Chicago Bulls basketball team, Rodman recounts his award-winning career with triumphant teams and his relationships with such colleagues and celebrities as Madonna in *Bad As I Wanna Be*.

RuPaul

Singer, dancer and cross-dressing supermodel RuPaul has gained fame as a statuesque drag performer in movies and television shows. *Lettin It All Hang Out: An Autobiography* details his cultural alienation and ultimate empowerment.

Tsutomu Shimomura

Computer security expert Shimomura relates a true-life story of cybersleuthing in *Takedown*, his account of how he tracked down a master hacker whose crimes included credit-card fraud and invasion of privacy.

Kate Wheeler

Ordained Buddhist nun, teacher, and two-time winner of the O. Henry Award, Wheeler debuts with a collection of short stories, *Not Where I Started From*, which was praised for “enticing and seductive” characters seeking enlightenment.

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Indexing note: All *Contemporary Authors* entries are indexed in the *Contemporary Authors* cumulative index, which is published separately and distributed with even-numbered *Contemporary Authors* original volumes and odd-numbered *Contemporary Authors New Revision Series* volumes.

As always, the most recent *Contemporary Authors* cumulative index continues to be the user's guide to the location of an individual author's listing.

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**Indicates that a listing has been compiled from secondary sources believed to be reliable, but has not been personally verified for this edition by the author sketched.*

ABBAS, Jailan 1952-

PERSONAL: Born March 11, 1952, in Cairo, Egypt; daughter of Mohamed Aly Abbas (an Egyptian Undersecretary of State for Finance) and Mariam A. Farid (a pharmacist); children: Mariam Bahi El Din. **Education:** Helwan University, B.A., 1972, M.A., 1988, Ph.D., 1996; Cairo University, postgraduate diploma (archaeology), 1978. **Religion:** Muslim.

ADDRESSES: *Home*—24 Rd. 200 Degla, Maadi, Cairo, Egypt. *Office*—Cairo American College, P.O. Box 39, Maadi, Cairo 11431, Egypt.

CAREER: School of Tourism and Hotel Management, Helwan University, Cairo, professor of guiding methodology, 1979-93; Cairo American College, Cairo, Egypt, teacher of Egyptian culture, 1981—. Active in community volunteer activities. Guest lecturer on Egyptian history and culture in many cultural and educational institutions.

MEMBER: Women's Association of Egypt, Union of Arab Historians.

WRITINGS:

FOR CHILDREN

The Festivals of Egypt, Hoopoe Books (Egypt), 1995, AMIDEAST Publications (Washington, DC), 1995.

OTHER

Metals and Jewelry of Islamic Egypt (in Arabic), Egyptian Information Department, 1987.

The Monuments of Ancient Egypt as Seen by Middle Ages Travelers (in Arabic), Egyptian-Lebanese Publishers, 1992.

Also author of a monthly column called "Dardashah" on Egyptian cultural and educational issues in the *Cairo-glyphics*, the newsletter of Cairo American College.

WORK IN PROGRESS: *Egypt: Land and People*, for children, in English; several books in Arabic for adults, including *Islamic Monuments of Egypt as Seen by Middle Ages Travelers* and *Feasts and Festivals of Egypt and Their Historical Origins*.

SIDELIGHTS: "When I was a child, my teachers always complimented my compositions and essay writing in both English and Arabic," Egyptian writer Jailan Abbas commented. "In middle school and high school I started writing poems which I kept for myself. I never thought I would be an author until I was asked by the Information Department in Egypt to write a simple book in a series to introduce laymen to Islamic arts. My first book was *Metals and Jewelry of Islamic Egypt*; still I did not think of myself as an author. It was not until I finished my M.A. that I felt I wanted people to benefit from what I researched, and not just academic professionals. In 1992 my second book, *The Monuments of Ancient Egypt as Seen by Middle Ages Travelers*, was published, also in Arabic and also for adults. This book was greatly complimented and very well received by the media.

"Now, how did I start writing for children? I teach Egyptian culture at Cairo American College in the elementary school. When I started fifteen years ago we had no text books. As a matter of fact, I could not

find one book to cover all of what I wanted to teach, so I started writing the material for children in grades 1-6. At that point I felt I would like children to know more about Egypt as I know it and feel it. I was very busy with my Ph.D., so I waited for a while. Coincidentally, a friend of mine who knew the owner of children's book publisher Hoopoe mentioned my idea. *The Festivals of Egypt* was the result; the information in this book was part of the research I did for my Ph.D. thesis. The book was also very well received and eighteen months after its publication we are preparing the second edition.

"I will continue writing for children in both English and Arabic. I believe that children are the future, and that the best way to respect other people's cultures is to know one's own culture and be proud of it. I also believe that to learn about a country you need to learn about its people—not just history or political movements. I hope to write for Egyptian children in Arabic, a series about Egypt so they may establish a belief and pride in their own culture. I have one daughter; she is an excellent, talented writer of poems and short stories and she illustrates her writing. Since her early childhood I have encouraged her to read and to write. I wish she would become a writer one day."

BIOGRAPHICAL/CRITICAL SOURCES:

PERIODICALS

Middle East Times (Egypt), May 21-27, 1995, p. 13.

* * *

ABELSON, Philip Hauge 1913-

PERSONAL: Born April 27, 1913, in Tacoma, WA; son of Ole Andrew (a civil engineer) and Ellen (a homemaker; maiden name, Hauge) Abelson; married Neva Martin (a physician and professor of medicine), December 30, 1936; children: Ellen Cherniavsky. **Education:** Washington State College (became Washington State University), B.A. (chemistry), 1933; Washington State University, M.A. (physics), 1935; University of California—Berkeley, Ph.D. (nuclear physics), 1939. **Avocational interests:** Playing bridge, reading, and gardening.

ADDRESSES: Home—Washington, DC.

CAREER: Scientist, writer, and editor. Worked as a surveyor at a construction camp, c. 1927-33; Washington State University, teaching assistant, 1933-c.35; University of California, Berkeley, teaching assistant, c. 1935-39; Carnegie Institution, WA, research scientist, 1939-c.40; Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, DC, physicist, c. 1940-46; Carnegie Institution, WA, Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, chair of biophysics, 1946-53, Geophysical Laboratory, director, 1953-71, institution president, 1971-85; *Journal of Geophysical Research*, coeditor with James Peoples, 1958-62; *Science* (weekly magazine), editor, 1962-84, deputy editor for engineering and applied science, beginning c. 1984; American Association for the Advancement of Science, science advisor, beginning c. 1984; Resources for the Future (a think tank), Washington, natural science fellow, 1985-87. Jet Propulsion Laboratory, member of advisory council; served on visiting committees of universities.

AWARDS, HONORS: Navy Distinguished Civilian Service Medal, 1945; Inducted into the National Academy of Sciences, geology division, 1959; Mellon Award, Carnegie-Mellon University, 1970; Kalinga Prize, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 1972; Distinguished Public Service Award, National Science Foundation, 1984; President's National Medal of Science, National Academy of Science, 1987; Public Welfare Medal, National Academy of Science, 1992. Awarded honorary doctoral degrees from several universities, including Yale University, 1964, Southern Methodist University, 1969, Tufts University, 1976, Duke University, 1981, and the University of Pittsburgh, 1982. Awarded an honorary doctorate degree in humane letters, 1968, from the University of Puget Sound.

WRITINGS:

(With Richard B. Roberts and others) *Studies of Biosynthesis in Escherichia Coli*, Carnegie Institution, 1955.

(Editor) *Researches in Geochemistry*, Wiley (New York), 1959.

A Critical Appraisal of Government Research Policy, Robert A. Welch Foundation (Houston, TX), 1963.

(Editor and compiler) *Energy: Use, Conservation, and Supply*, American Association for the Advancement of Science (Washington, DC), 1974.

Energy for Tomorrow, University of Washington Press, 1975.

Food: Politics, Economics, Nutrition, and Research, Academic Press, 1976.

(Editor, with Allen L. Hammond) *Materials: Renewable and Nonrenewable Sources*, American Association for the Advancement of Science, c. 1976.

(Editor, with Hammond) *Electronics: The Continuing Revolution*, American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1977.

(Editor, with Hammond) *Energy Two: Use, Conservation, and Supply*, American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1978.

Health Care: Regulation, Economics, Ethics, Practice, American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1978.

(Editor, with Mary Dorfman) *Advanced Technology*, American Association for the Advancement of Science, c. 1980.

(Editor, with Ruth Kulstad) *The Science Centennial Review*, American Association for the Advancement of Science, c. 1980.

(Editor) *Biotechnology and Biological Frontiers*, American Association for the Advancement of Science, c. 1984.

(Editor, with Eleanore Butz and Solomon H. Snyder) *Neuroscience*, American Association for the Advancement of Science, c. 1985.

Enough of Pessimism: 100 Essays, American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1985.

Contributor to journals and periodicals, including *Science*, *Annual Review of Earth Planet Science*, and *The Public Perspective*.

SIDELIGHTS: As an acclaimed nuclear physicist, biochemist, microbiologist, physiologist and geologist, Philip Hauge Abelson ranks among the most versatile scientists of his day. His achievements include discovering the element neptunium and designing the blueprint for nuclear submarines. Not content to excel solely in the sciences, Abelson is also an accomplished writer and editor of distinguished scientific periodicals. In 1993, at age 80, he was working as science advisor and deputy editor for the American Association for the Advancement of Science. "I will continue to do things, partly because I can write," Abelson said during an interview with contributor Cynthia Washam. "I will find a way of remaining active."

Abelson was born April 27, 1913, in Tacoma, Washington. His father, Ole Andrew Abelson, was a civil engineer, while his mother, Ellen (Hauge) Abelson, was a homemaker and among the few women of her day to attend college. Abelson learned the value of

education at age fourteen when his father arranged for him to work as a surveyor at a construction camp, directing laborers installing steel pipes. The young surveyor quickly realized that the only way to communicate with the steel workers was to adopt their language and was soon exchanging curses with the best of them. "The seven months spent at the construction camp as a surveyor was a maturing experience," Abelson related in an article for the *Annual Review of Earth Planet Science*. "It made me appreciate the potential value of a college education."

In 1930, Abelson enrolled in the chemical engineering program at Washington State College (now Washington State University). Although working as a surveyor through college to help pay for tuition, Abelson managed to take a heavy course load and earn his bachelor's degree in chemistry in three years. He took graduate courses in physics and was fortunate to receive a teaching assistantship in 1933 during the Great Depression. Two years later, Abelson was awarded a master's degree in physics from Washington State University. One of his graduate assignments was to read an article describing the cyclotron—an accelerator which propels charged particles using an alternating electric field in a constant magnetic field. It was invented in 1929 by American physicist Ernest Orlando Lawrence at the University of California at Berkeley, placing the institution in the forefront of nuclear physics. Captivated by the article and determined to become part of the work it described, Abelson secured a teaching assistantship in physics at Berkeley.

After obtaining his doctoral degree in nuclear physics from the University of California at Berkeley in 1939, Abelson joined the Carnegie Institution of Washington. There he studied the products generated from the activation of uranium by neutrons and became intrigued by a particular unidentified element. Collaborating with Edwin M. McMillan of the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory at Berkeley, the two scientists discovered that the product was a new chemical element, classifying it as radioactive element 93. It was later named neptunium. More than 50 years later—in which he has been part of a multitude of landmark achievements—Abelson still regarded the discovery as the greatest moment in his career. "A good many very bright and competent people had access to the same information I did," he told Washam. "Because I re-read something in the literature and thought about it, it occurred to me that this required a different approach. Getting that connection led me to the discovery."

During World War II, Abelson became a physicist on the staff of the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, DC. His work there was connected with the Manhattan Project, code name for the most secret scientific U.S. operation of World War II, in which the objective was to create an atomic bomb. Abelson, along with John I. Hoover, developed the liquid thermal diffusion process for separating uranium isotopes—groups of chemically identical atoms of the same element and atomic number with differing atomic mass. Abelson and Hoover were credited with decreasing the time needed to develop the bomb by eight days. For his wartime contributions, Abelson was in 1945 awarded the Navy Distinguished Civilian Service Medal, the first of many important awards he would receive during his career. After the war, Abelson remained at the lab until 1946, designing the blueprint for a nuclear-powered submarine that could cruise underwater for months without surfacing. His design would serve as the model for the U.S. Navy's nuclear submarines.

In 1946, Abelson returned to the Carnegie Institution as chair of biophysics in the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism. He and his colleagues used newly developed radioactive isotopes to tag chemical elements in order to observe their behavior in microorganisms. The results of their study were published in 1955 by the Carnegie Institution as "Studies of Biosynthesis in *Escherichia coli*." *Escherichia* is a bacterium of the rod-like species *bacillus*, found in the intestinal tract of mammals as well as in soil and in aquatic habitats, and is known to cause bacterial dysentery. The book became a reference work on what is commonly referred to as "E. coli" bacteria, and has remained in wide use for over four decades, particularly since *E. coli* was determined the key microorganism for genetic engineering.

In 1953, Abelson became the director of the Geophysical Laboratory at the Carnegie Institution. There, he sought to determine whether amino acids—essential building blocks of proteins—were preserved in fossils. He discovered that the life-span of amino acids is strongly affected by temperature and that they can at low temperatures survive as long as hundreds of millions of years. Abelson's study results, published in the Carnegie Institution's annual report and in *Scientific American*, generated considerable interest among the branch of biochemists involved in paleontology—the study of fossil remains from previous geological eras. During the 1960s, the Geophysical Laboratory grew into a premier research center for organic geochemistry—the study of the chemical con-

figuration of both terrestrial and extraterrestrial solid matter. There, scientists examined if ancient life forms employed the same biosynthetic processes—in which living organisms generate chemical compounds—as those of today, and if life exists elsewhere in the solar system.

In 1959, Abelson was honored with induction into the National Academy of Sciences, where he chose to be listed in the geology division. Over the years, he was also awarded honorary doctoral degrees from several universities, including Yale University in 1964, Southern Methodist University in 1969, Tufts University in 1976, Duke University in 1981, and the University of Pittsburgh in 1982. The University of Puget Sound awarded Abelson an honorary doctorate degree in humane letters in 1968.

While serving as director of the Geophysical Laboratory, Abelson consistently participated in research. He also edited the manuscripts for a book the institution produced annually. Editing stimulated Abelson, and when he was asked to become coeditor of the *Journal of Geophysical Research* in 1958, he readily accepted. Within a few years, he and coeditor James Peoples had expanded the annual journal page count from eight hundred to six thousand.

So strong was Abelson's reputation that in 1962 he was offered the position of editor at *Science*, the highly-respected weekly forum for American scientists. Unwilling to give up his research, Abelson arranged it so he could edit the magazine while remaining at the Geophysical Laboratory. Abelson's first mission as editor was to make the magazine more engaging and current. He began by cutting the time between article submission and publication from about three months to as little as nine days. To bring readers the latest science news, he recruited scouts of scientific news at several leading schools and research centers. Abelson's most memorable contribution to *Science* was his thoughtful, often controversial editorials. Never afraid to ruffle feathers, Abelson frequently used his forum to attack popular institutions and fellow scientists. One of his prime targets was the space program. He wrote in a February 12, 1965, editorial that "in looking for life on Mars we could establish ourselves the reputation of being the greatest Simple Simons of all time," and on March 17, 1967, his editorial claimed that "manned missions have contributed little scientifically. The unmanned missions have had a cost-effectiveness for scientific achievements perhaps one hundred times that of the manned flights." Addressing the spiraling cost of

health care, Abelson warned in an editorial on May 14, 1976, that the 118.5 billion dollars that the nation spent that year on medical care could not buy better health. Instead, he advised Americans to abandon their sedentary lifestyles, poor diets, and smoking habits.

In spite of the critical tone of many of Abelson's editorials, his outlook was essentially optimistic. A January 9, 1976, editorial commemorating the Bicentennial year challenged political leaders to adopt the optimism and forward thinking of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson: "This country has turned its back on optimism and is becoming a nation of pessimists." "Pessimism," he continued, "is a kind of sickness that debilitates the individual and the country. One would not advocate that we become a nation of Panglosses. However, enough of pessimism. It leads nowhere but to paralysis and decay." A collection of one hundred of Abelson's editorials was published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1985 as *Enough of Pessimism*.

In 1971, Abelson became president of the Carnegie Institution. He continued as editor of *Science*, but was unable to maintain his involvement in research. Seeking to replace the stimulation research had offered, Abelson served on the visiting committees of universities and on the advisory council of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. His scientific curiosity led him to automobile manufacturing plants in the United States and Japan, research laboratories in Japan and China, and the Alaska pipeline during its final construction phase.

Abelson stepped down from his editing post at *Science* in 1984 with more than 450 editorials to his credit. He remained with the magazine as deputy editor for engineering and applied science and with the American Association for the Advancement of Science as a science advisor. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Abelson continued receiving awards for his numerous achievements. In 1970, Carnegie-Mellon University gave him its Mellon Award, and in 1972 he received the Kalinga Prize from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

In 1974, Abelson gave three lectures at the University of Washington, which were collected in a book titled *Energy for Tomorrow*. In his lectures, Abelson discussed the energy shortage, proposed ways to increase the energy supply, and recommended a program for conserving energy. In 1984, the National

Science Foundation honored Abelson with its Distinguished Public Service Award. Three years later, he received the President's National Medal of Science from the National Academy of Science, who also awarded Abelson the Public Welfare Medal in 1992. Abelson returned to research in 1985, when he accepted a two-year post as a natural science fellow at the Washington-based think tank, Resources for the Future, where his work centered around reviewing and recommending public policy on toxic chemicals.

Outside of the working environment, Abelson lives by the common sense philosophy he often promoted in his editorials. He runs three to four miles most mornings. On his eightieth birthday, he ran five. His hobbies include playing bridge, reading, and tending his tomato garden. Even at his home in Washington, DC, science is a part of Abelson's life. He and his wife, retired physician and professor of medicine Neva (Martin) Abelson, enjoy keeping each other current on new developments in their respective fields. They were married December 30, 1936, while Abelson was a graduate student at Berkeley, and have one daughter, Ellen (Abelson) Cherniavsky.

BIOGRAPHICAL/CRITICAL SOURCES:

BOOKS

Current Biography, H. W. Wilson, 1965.

PERIODICALS

Annual Review of Earth Planet Science, 1992, pp. 1-17.

New York Review of Books, February 19, 1976.

OTHER

Interview with Cynthia Washam, conducted July 30, 1993.

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ABRAMSON, Albert 1922-

PERSONAL: Born June 9, 1922, in Chicago, IL; son of Joseph D. (a theater manager) and Minnie L. (a homemaker) Abramson; married Arlene Betty Corin (a homemaker), January 8, 1950; children: Jay, Susan Fein. **Ethnicity:** "American." **Education:** University of Southern California, B.A., 1950. **Politics:**