MEMORIAL RESOLUTION:  HENRY KOFFLER (1922-2018), DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Professor Henry Koffler, Head of the Purdue University Department of Biological Sciences from 1959 to 1975, passed away in Tucson, Arizona, on Saturday, March 10, 2018 at the age of 95. Professor Koffler, born in 1922 in Vienna, Austria, came alone to the U.S. at age 17 after the Nazi annexation of Austria in 1939, and began undergraduate studies at the University of Arizona in 1940 in Agricultural Chemistry, from which he graduated in 1943. He subsequently earned M. S. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Wisconsin.

He joined the faculty of Purdue University in 1947 and was promoted to Full Professor in 1952, the youngest Full Professor at the University. He held a Fellowship in 1953 from the prestigious Guggenheim Foundation, and was the recipient of the Eli Lilly Award in Bacteriology and Immunology from the American Society of Bacteriology in 1957. He became the Head of the Department of Biological Sciences in 1959 at the age of 37, 12 years after obtaining his Ph.D. Leaving Purdue after 16 years as Head of Biological Sciences, he served as Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Minnesota, Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and was appointed President of the University of Arizona in 1982, a position marked by distinctive academic achievements for the University until his retirement in 1991.

Professor Koffler received Honorary Doctorate Degrees from Purdue, the University of Arizona, and Amherst College, as well as an appointment as Officer, Ordre des Palmes Académiques (France), and was selected as a Charter Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology, and as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Professor Koffler was a true Renaissance scholar and administrator, with an unusual breadth of vision in both research and administrative areas of University life, including an especially acute and modern view of what Biology should be. In 2013, at age 90, Professor Koffler became an accomplished digital artist, using his iPad to create abstract paintings inspired by biology and chemistry. He was involved in the founding of the Southern Arizona Arts and Cultural Alliance in Tucson, AZ and, through it, contributed several shows of his art.

Professor Henry Koffler is survived by Phyllis (Pierson) Koffler, his wife of more than 71 years.