

Accession No.: 87-39

PROCESSING RECORD
SCRIPPS INSTITUTION OF OCEANOGRAPHY ARCHIVES

Foundation for Ocean Research

Foundation for Ocean Research Records, 1980-1987

Physical Description: 1 record center carton

Description: The collection consists of the records of the Foundation for Ocean Research from 1980-1987. The material includes Trustees correspondence and meetings, proposals projects.

Excerpt from "John Dove Isaacs III, 1913-1980" by Richard Seymour and Paul Dayton. IN: Coming of Age: Scripps Institution of Oceanography, A Centennial Volume 1903-2003. Robert L. Fisher, Edward D. Goldberg, and Charles S. Cox, eds. La Jolla, California: Scripps Institution of Oceanography, 2003. pp. 57-63: "John Isaacs was a close friend of a San Diego entrepreneur philanthropist named Robert Peterson. Peterson and a partner created the Foundation for Ocean Research (FOR) mainly to fund Isaacs' most speculative ideas. Among these was the notion that graduate students freed from the distractions and aggravation of competing for laboratory or field investigation resources and working together in a highly supportive environment would be far more creative than their peers embedded in the Scripps establishment. An off-campus facility was created with shops, laboratories, office space, and support staff. Isaacs met at least once a week with a group of specially selected graduate students who were supported by FOR. Out of this experiment in education came a number of demonstrations of Isaacs' ideas, including the salinity power concept and the breath heater. Isaacs believed that the concept of attempting to warm scuba divers by heating their suits through various means was wrong, and that most of the heat loss came from breathing cold dry air from their tanks and then exhaling warm moist air at the expense of their body heat. He conceived of the idea of adding a very small amount of hydrogen to the breathing air and then passing it through a platinum catalyst that both warmed it and formed water vapor. It worked spectacularly, was patented, and was licensed by FOR, after Isaacs' death, to an entrepreneur who saw its much larger potential in medical applications for reducing the stress on patients who breathed cold, dry oxygen. The FOR as incubator provided a rapid means of testing many of John Isaacs' ideas. He tossed them out around the FOR conference table and a student could decide to work on one of them, occasionally leading to a Ph.D. dissertation. One such was his 1970s idea that the rotational momentum put into the atmosphere by lines of cars passing in opposite directions would increase the incidence of tornadoes in North America (where cars pass on the side proper to induce counterclockwise rotation). This difficult to prove concept was not readily accepted by atmospheric scientists, although the Berkeley physics department scientists took it very seriously when Isaacs presented a lecture there on the subject. In the last years of his life, he expressed some serious disappointment about the FOR experiment. It seemed to him that the students worked on his ideas exclusively, rather than generating their own and that they spent little time thinking about their projects, as opposed to working on them, except under his direct questioning at the weekly seminars. Perhaps the FOR students who most closely met his ideal of creativity and self-motivation were the Vidal brothers. They were Mexican nationals and worked jointly on different aspects of submarine hot springs off Baja California. The brothers discovered thermophilic bacteria that thrived at temperatures above the boiling point of water long before the discovery of the mid-ocean ridge hot springs with their surprising collection of radically different life forms. Without the Isaacs inspiration, FOR gradually disappeared, although the weekly seminar continued for a few years under the guidance of one of his ex-students."

John Isaacs; Robert O. Peterson

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Box	Folder Title
1	Foundation for Ocean Research: Richard Cassin, 1985-1986
	Foundation for Ocean Research: Projects: KAPLAN, 1983
	Foundation for Ocean Research: Trustees Correspondence, 1983 -1988
	RJS: Foundation for Ocean Research Trustees 1980-1986
	Foundation for Ocean Research Grand 1983-1984
	The John Isaac's Device (blue folder)
	Foundation for Ocean Research: Projects: Breath Heater 1985-1986
	Foundation for Ocean Research 1984 meeting: 11 January 1984 (Wednesday)
	Foundation for Ocean Research Trustees Meeting: 31 October, 1983 (Monday)
	Foundation for Ocean Research Trustees Meeting: 15 June, 1983 (Wednesday)
	RJS: Foundations for Ocean Research Profiler, 1981-1982
	Foundation for Ocean Research: John Dove Isaacs
	Presidential Chair, 1982-1984
	RJS: Foundation for Ocean Research: Isaacs, John D., 1980-1982
	Foundation for Ocean Research: 1982 Audio-Visual Presentation
	Foundation for Ocean Research: Correspondence, 1985-1987
	Foundation for Ocean Research: Administration, 1983-1987

BOX**FOLDER TITLE**

RJS: Foundation for Ocean Research: Scholars Program, 1981-1983

RJS: Foundation for Ocean Research: Proposals, 1981-1984

Foundation for Ocean Research Trustees Meeting: 14 May, 1984 (Monday)

Foundation for Ocean Research 1984 Meeting: 8 June 1984

Foundation for Ocean Research 1985 Meeting: 7 March, 1985 (Thursday)

Foundation for Ocean Research 1985 Meeting: 20 September, 1985 (Friday)

Foundation for Ocean Research 1986 Meeting: 17 January, 1986

Foundation for Ocean Research 1986 Meeting: 21 March, 1986

Foundation for Ocean Research 1986 Meeting: 4 November, 1986

Foundation for Ocean Research 1987 Meeting: 6 February, 1987

Foundation for Ocean Research 1987 Meeting: July 22, 1987

Foundation for Ocean Research: IMR Graduate Student Interchange