

Wallace Walter Atwood, PhD (1872-1949)

Wallace W. Atwood served on the Academy's Board as Secretary from 1909 to 1919, as First Vice-President from ca. 1918 to ca. 1920, and as Acting Director from 1911 to 1914, roughly between directors Baker and Woodruff. Atwood gave lectures in geology at the Academy and worked on behalf of the Academy to arrange working relationships with local schools. Atwood designed a celestial sphere that would rotate around an observer standing on a fixed platform inside. The first such sphere was built for the Academy and named Atwood Celestial Sphere, which opened to the public in June 1913. Atwood himself would often lead discussions for groups inside the sphere.



A Chicago native, Wallace W. Atwood was born October 1, 1872. He attended the University of Chicago where he studied physical geology and earned his PhD in 1903. His interest areas encompassed the broad fields of geology, physical geography (referred to historically as physiography), and astronomy. He worked with the New Jersey Geological Survey as an assistant geologist in 1897 and served as a geologist with the United States Geological Survey from 1901 until his death in 1949. He returned to teach at the University of Chicago as an associate professor of geology from 1902 to 1913 and then went on to teach at Harvard University where he served as Professor of Physiography (he carried out Academy business remotely for a time during this transition). He later served as President of Clark University in Massachusetts from 1920 to 1946, where he also headed the School of Geography and helped establish one of the first graduate programs in geography. He died July 24, 1949 in Annisquam, Massachusetts.

References

Clark University, Massachusetts, Archives and Special Collections, Papers of Wallace W. Atwood. Atwood biographical note. https://www2.clarku.edu/research/archives/atwood/bio_note.cfm

The University of Chicago Magazine, Nov. 1912-July 1913. Volume V.p 27.

- Mention in Alumni affairs,: "1897 [class of]. Wallace W. Atwood, Associate Professor of Physiography..... has recently invented a sidereal sphere, a large apparatus to assist in instructional work in descriptive astronomy. One of these spheres will soon be installed in the Academy of Sciences in Lincoln Park, Chicago, of which institution he is secretary."
- Alumni update on Wallace Walter Atwood, page 142-43.
- Picture of Wallace W. Atwood, class of 1897, on page 138.

Atwood, Wallace W. (1931). *The World at Work*. Boston, MA: Ginn & Co.

Atwood, Wallace W. (1940). *The Physiographic Provinces of North America*. Boston, MA: Ginn & Co.