

## *In Memoriam*

RICHARD SCHLEGEL

August 29, 1913-May 30, 1982

A good friend of *Zygon* and a very helpful Editorial Advisory Board member, Richard Schlegel was interested in exploring the implications of quantum physics for questions of human knowing and purpose in relation to the rest of the universe. With a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Chicago and a Master of Arts degree from the University of Iowa—both in philosophy—he earned his Doctor of Philosophy degree in physical chemistry from the University of Chicago in 1943. After working on the Manhattan Project at Chicago and teaching physics at Princeton University, he continued his career at the University of Michigan from 1948 to 1981. Three times during this period he was Visiting Associate at the Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge, England, and twice an affiliate of the History and Philosophy of Science Group at Cambridge. A Fellow of the American Physics Society, he authored four books and numerous articles that reflected his research on Lorentz transformations and quantum theory, cosmology, the limits of science, and the cultural and religious implications of modern physics.

Convinced that scientific and religious thinking were exploring the same universe, although with different questions and approaches, Schlegel argued against scientific materialism insofar as it denied a place for human purpose in the universe and against traditional theology insofar as it affirmed the independence of God from the world so that humans could have no influence on divine activity. In his June 1979 *Zygon* article on “Quantum Physics and the Divine Postulate,” Schlegel proposed “that the divine element in nature is manifest both in patterns of behavior that are established and in desired novel actions or efforts toward new patterns.” He went on to affirm that humans have more opportunity than other terrestrial animals to express and define their own lives and concluded by saying, “In taking up the parallel with quantum theory I am emphasizing that God has not determined what each person shall do. Rather each person in developing his life does form his own definition of God and hence determines part of the divine aspect of nature.” From the scientist’s role as an observer-participant in quantum interactions to every person’s preservative yet creative efforts in transmitting culture, Richard Schlegel saw each of us as interdependent with the rest of our society, our species, and the world. He himself enjoyed friendly interactions with nature and other persons, and in his thought and living he expressed the high significance of human life participating in the divine activity in the universe.