

# PREFACE

The science of the second half of the 20th century was dominated by the biomedical fields and this is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. The present selection of interviews gives a cross section covering a broad range of topics, personalities, and circumstances of recording. I prepared these interviews during the past few years. The volume includes two interviews by Magdolna Hargittai, my wife and fellow scientist who edited this volume.

The usual procedure of an interview is the following. After the recording session, I prepare and slightly edit the transcripts and they are corrected and revised by the interviewee. This procedure is repeated until the interviewee feels comfortable with the material. The finished product sometimes differs only in minor changes from the original transcripts, in other cases the changes are substantial. I see my role as a fellow scientist rather than that of an investigative reporter in these interviews. If the interviewee declines to answer a question, I drop the question from the published material. My experience is that this approach works better on the long run than highlighting any embarrassing situation. In a few cases I opted for compiling a profile on the basis of the conversation rather than having the interview format.

The first volume of my interviews, *Candid Science: Conversations with Famous Chemists*, was published by Imperial College Press, London in 2000. One with more chemists will follow the present volume and the fourth volume will feature physicists. The classification is admittedly loose and some of the interviews of the present volume could have appeared in other volumes. The interviewees in the present volume include physicists, chemists,

biologists, physicians, and others, by training, but they join conveniently under the biomedical label. About half of the interviews appear here in print for the first time and some of those that had been published before have been augmented.

I am grateful to all my interviewees for their patience and cooperation. I appreciate the illustrative materials from many of the interviewees, Ms. Kathy Bendo (daughter-in-law of George Hitchings), the Archives of the Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, England, the Archives of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in Cold Spring Harbor, New York, and the Archives of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California. I express my special thanks to Edit Ernster of Stockholm for lending me images not only for the Ernster interview but for some of the other interviews as well. I appreciate the travel opportunities that our research and teaching provides and the family vacations that have been turned into interesting visits by these meetings and interviews.

Budapest, January 2001

István Hargittai