

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE NEW YORK ASTRONOMICAL CORPORATION AND THE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

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ABSTRACT: The New York Astronomical Corporation was created in 1968 by a group of New York State astronomers who were interested in building a large telescope for the use of New York astronomers. Curtis Hemenway lead the effort, forming a committee in 1967 to look into the idea of raising funds for a new observatory. For five years a concerted effort was made to raise funds for the building and operation of a 150-in telescope. The site chosen was Hawaii. During the period of our campaign funds for astronomical projects were becoming more difficult to obtain and in 1973 we ceased the fundraising effort.

During the five years NYAC held many meetings at which students and staff gave papers. We decided to continue this part of our activities and in 1973 the Astronomical Society of New York was formed. All the astronomers and students at a NYAC institution automatically became a member of ASNY. The dues paid to NYAC helped fund the activities of ASNY. The main activity of ASNY was to hold two meetings each year for the purpose of exchanging information among New York astronomers about their research activities. Prizes were set up for the best student papers and we helped fund trips to observatories for observations by students. The review papers at the meetings, and abstracts of the contributed papers, were published in the News Letter of the Astronomical Society of New York.

1. THE NEW YORK ASTRONOMICAL COUNCIL

This was the group set up by Hemenway to explore the idea of building and operating a large optical telescope for New York astronomers. Representatives from eight universities and colleges attended the first meeting which was held at SUNY Albany in November of 1967, The second meeting was held at Columbia University and and we decided to incorporate the group and to submit a proposal to the New York State Technology Foundation for a feasibility study. At the third meeting, held at Mees Observatory in June of 1968 the charter of NYAC was signed and notarized.

2. THE NEW YORK ASTRONOMICAL CORPORATION

The first meeting of NYAC was held at Cornell University in November of 1968. There were eighteen astronomers from twelve New York State institutions in attendance. The sixth annual meeting was held at the University of Rochester in November of 1972. In this period of time we wrote a proposal for funds to build an observatory, had a meeting with five outside reviewers and looked for sources of money. Some of the NYAC institutions made commitments of funds, provided that other institutions also made similar offers of support. In 1971 we modified our proposal and asked for support for a more modest telescope. There was a possibility of joining with Tom Gehrels at the University of Arizona in constructing a 70-in telescope, but again the necessary funds to carry out this project were not obtained.

3. THE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

At the seventh meeting of NYAC/ASNY, held at Syracuse University ASNY was formally set up. A new Board of Directors was appointed. It was decided to hold two meetings each year; the fall meeting would be held by Union College and RPI, in rotation. The spring meeting would be held at the various member institutions as invitations were received. It was decided to publish the News Letter of the Astronomical Society of New York which would contain the text of the review papers at each meeting and abstracts of the

contributed papers. The fiftieth issue is scheduled to be published for the Fall, 2001 meeting which will be held at Union College. The Board set up the Graduate Student Prize to be awarded for the best paper submitted by a graduate student at one of the NYAC institutions. At the ninth annual meeting, held in Schenectady, the Board set up a student grant program to help students to get to observing runs at non-NYAC observatories. At the start the grants were set at a level of \$300 per trip and were raised to \$500 per trip some years later.

In 1981 ASNY held a two day meeting at Colgate University on the subject, "X-Ray Symposium - 1981". The proceedings were published by the L. Davis Press. In 1988, at the 21st meeting, the Board set up a new prize, the Undergraduate Student Prize, to be awarded for the best undergraduate research paper submitted to the prize committee.

The 25th Anniversary Meeting was held at Cornell University April 23 - 25, 1992. Sixty-nine astronomers attended. 18 review papers and 14 poster papers were given at the meeting. The proceedings were published by the L. Davis Press in a volume entitled, "New York State Astronomy".

Since 1992 ASNY has continued organizing the two scientific sessions each year, awarding the graduate student and undergraduate prizes and giving travel support to students going on observing trips. Several tables and graphs are presented in the section, TABLES & PLOTS. In Table 1 the officers of NYAC and the number of institutional members are presented. In Table 2 the winners of the Graduate and Undergraduate Prizes are listed. Table 3 contains the names of students who received travel support for an observing trip. Table 4 contains the record of meetings. Table 5 lists the names of the Invited Speakers at Fall and Spring meetings.

There are eight plots. The first plot shows the length of the terms of the various officers of NYAC. The next shows the distribution of the sites of meetings. Since the fall meeting is held at Union College or R.P.I., these two institutions have the greatest number of meetings. The next plot shows the distribution of prizes by institution. The fourth plot shows the distribution of Invited Speakers by institution. Non-NYAC institutions appear in this plot, with Yale having the greatest number of invited speakers for a non-NYAC institution. The fifth plot shows the invited speakers who have given the most papers. The sixth, bottom plot shows the number of institutions which are members of NYAC, by year. The seventh plot shows the length of the terms of the astronomers who have served as Institutional Representatives for NYAC. The eighth and last plot shows the growth of funds placed in the Certificates of Deposit from 1971 to 2001.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Over the years ASNY has been successful in providing a forum for students to give their first papers before a scientific gathering. The prizes honor the best work of graduate and undergraduate students. And the travel support has helped a large number of students (graduate and undergraduate) to go on observing trips. The invited talks at the meetings cover a wide range of topics and help to inform the New York community of astronomers of recent astronomical developments. The News Letter of ASNY provides a permanent record of these activities. ASNY has provided a way for New York astronomers to keep in contact and to be aware of the various research projects underway at each institution.

5. TABLES AND PLOTS

TABLE 1

Officers of NYAC and Number of Institutions

Year 19.	Chairman	Vice-Chair	Sec/Treas Ed. News Let.(1976-)	# of Inst.
68-69	C. L. Hemenway	Y. Terzian	D. Philip	16
69-70	"	"	"	16
70-71	"	"	"	19
71-72	"	"	"	20
72-73	M. Greenberg	"	"	21
73-74	"	"	"	16
74-75	S. Sharpless	"	"	18
75-76	"	"	"	19
76-77	"	"	"	17
77-78	"	"	"	17
78-79	T. Gold	A. Meltzer	"	17
79-80	"	"	"	17
80-81	"	"	"	16
81-82	"	"	"	15
82-83	"	"	"	12
83-84	"	D. Helfand	"	12
84-85	"	"	"	12
85-86	"	"	"	11
86-87	D. Helfand	M. Kutner	"	11
87-88	"	"	"	11
88-89	"	"	"	11
89-90	"	"	"	12
90-91	M. Kutner	T. Balonek	"	13
91-92	"	"	"	13
92-93	"	"	"	13
93-94	"	"	"	14
94-95	"	"	"	14
95-96	T. Balonek	—	"	14
96-97	"	P. Nicholson	"	13
97-98	"	"	"	14
98-99	D. Peterson	"	"	14
99-00	"	"	"	14
00-01	"	"	"	14

TABLE 2

ASNY Prizes

Graduate Student Prize		
Year	Name	Institution
2001	Erika Gibb	R.P.I.
2000	Hsiao-Wan Chen	SUNY SB
1000	Lynn Matthews	SUNY SB
1998	Jenifer Goetz	Rochester
1997	Colin Roald	Rochester
1996	Shobita Satyapal	Rochester
1995	Denise Smith	Cornell
1994	Michael Egan	R.P.I.
1993	Jayaram Chengalur	Cornell
1992	Tod Strohmayer	Rochester
1991	Lars Bildsten	Cornell
1990	Thomas Herbst	Cornell
1989	K. Chen	Columbia
1988	T. T. Hamilton	Columbia
1987	No Prize	
1986	C. E. Woodward	Rochester
1985	J. -P. Caillault	Columbia
1984	Patrick McDermott	Rochester
1983	No Prize	
1982	Rida Farouki	Cornell
1981	Marc Lacasse	Rochester
1980	No Prize	
1979	Paul Schinder	Cornell
1978	F. Wesemael	Rochester
1977	Robert Hohlfeld	Cornell
1976	Alan Marchant	Cornell
		Frederick Rasio Cornell
		Quingde Wang Columbia
Undergraduate Prize		
Year	Name	Institution
2000	Matthew Barczys	Rochester
1999	Paul Wiggins	Cornell
1998	David Kaplan	Cornell
1993	Leah Bucholz	Rochester
1991	Jennifer Christensen	Colgate
Undergraduate Prize (Dudley Obs.)		
Year	Name	Institution
1994	Jean Chiar	R.P.I.

TABLE 3

Year	Name	Travel Awards Institution
2000	S. S. Shenoy	RPI
1999	Carl Welch	Rochester
1999	Davienne Monblue	R.P.I.
1998	Erika Gibb	R.P.I.
1997	Colin Roald	Rochester
1997	Carl Welch	Rochester
1997	Nicholas Reines	Rochester
1996	Jennifer Goetz	Rochester
1995	Lida He	R.P.I.
1995	David Berger	Colgate
1995	Jean Chiar	R.P.I.
1995	Tyler Nordgren	Cornell
1995	Kristen Larson	R.P.I.
1993	Eric Howard	Rochester
1993	Sean Carey	R.P.I.
1993	Scott Libonate	Rochester
1993	Steve Solomon	Rochester
1992	Douglas Hamilton	Cornell
1992	Donald Mizuno	R.P.I.
1992	I. Mosqueira	Cornell
1992	Sean Carey	R.P.I.
1992	Chad Jennings	Vassar
1992	Edward Moore	Columbia
1991	Scott Libonte	R.P.I.
1991	Gino Thomas	Columbia
1991	J. Chengalur	Cornell.
1991	Sean Carey	R.P.I.
1991	S. Solomon	Rochester
1991	Paula Turner	Rochester
1991	A. Rasmussen	Columbia
1991	E. Gottheld	Columbia
1991	M. Eracleous	Columbia
1991	T. Megeath	Cornell
1991	Sean Carey	R.P.I.
1990	D. Mizuno	R.P.I.
1989	D. Mizuno	R.P.I.
1989	James Moran	
1986	Farhard Yusef-Zadeh	Columbia
1985	J. Leous	R.P.I.
1984	P McDermott.	Rochester
1984	S. E. Schneider	Cornell
1983	M. Skrutskie	R.P.I.
1983	A. Moneti	Rochester
1982	C. E. Woodward	Rochester
1982	S. Colgate	Cornell

TABLE 4
Record of Meetings

Year	Spring	Fall
2001	No Meeting	Union College
2000	University of Rochester	R.P.I.
1999	Vassar College	Union College
1998	Columbia University	R.P.I.
1997	Colgate University	Union College
1996	Alfred University	R.P.I.
1995	R.I.T.	Union College
1994	SUNY SB	R.P.I.
1993	Geneseo	Union College
1992	Cornell (25 th Anniv.)	R.P.I.
1991	Colgate University	Union College
1990	Alfred University	R.P.I.
1989	Cornell University	Union College
1988	Vassar College	R.P.I.
1987	Colgate University	Union College
1986	University of Rochester	R.P.I.
1985	Alfred University	Union College
1984	Columbia University	R.P.I.
1983	Cornell University	Union College
1982	University of Rochester	R.P.I.
1981	Colgate University	Union College
1980	Cornell University	R.P.I.
1979	Syracuse University	Union College/Dudley Obs.
1978	Alfred University	Union College
1977	SUNY Oswego	R.P.I.
1976	Hayden Planetarium	Union College
1975		R.P.I.
1974		Syracuse University
1973		University of Rochester
1972		SUNYA
1971		Colgate University
1970		Goddard Space Flight Center

TABLE 5
Invited Speakers

Spring Meetings		Fall Meetings
Ian Gatley (Roch. Inst. of Tech.)	2000	Susan Terebey (Union College)
Robert Garrison (Univ. of Toronto)	2000	Heidi Newerg (R.P.I.)
Rebecca Surman (Union College)	1999	Davis Philip (Union College)
Adam Frank (U of Rochester)	1999	Wendy Bauer (Wellesley College)
Fred Walter & P. An (SUNYSB)	1998	Glenn Ciolek (R.P.I.)
Deane Peterson (SUNYSB)	1998	Ralph Alpher (Union College)
Gordon Stacey (Cornell)	1997	Mary Crone (Skidmore)
Russell Hulse (Princeton)	1997	E. Blanton & C. Crass (Columbia)
Jim Napolitano (R.P.I.)	1996	Hugh van Horn (NSF)
Arlin Crofts (Columbia)	1996	Thomas Balonek (Colgate)
Riccardo Giovanelli (Cornell)	1995	Jon Marr (Union College)
Peter Chen (Goddard Space Flight Cent.)	1995	Rebecca Koopmann (Union College)
Jack Lissauer (SUNYSB)	1994	Andrew Vanture (Union College)
Kenneth Mighell (Columbia)	1994	Michael Gaffey (R.P.I.)
Jill Tarter (NASA/Ames)	1993	Ralph Alpher (Union College)
Francois Pinchet (U of Rochester)	1993	Laura Kay (Barnard College)
25 th Anniversary Meeting	1992	Vytas Straizys (ITPA, Lithuania)
25 th Anniversary Meeting	1992	Kathy Mead (Union College)
Thomas Hamilton (Columbia)	1991	David Peak (Union College)
Anthony Aveni (Colgate)	1991	Doug Whittet (R.P.I.)
Peter Usher (Penn. State Univ.)	1990	Wayne Roberge (R.P.I.)
Phillip Nicholson (Cornell)	1990	Lee Mundy (Univ. of Maryland)
James Houck (Cornell)	1989	Debra Elmegreen (Vassar College)
James Moran (Harvard)	1989	Ken Janes (Boston University)
William Herbst (Wesleyan)	1988	Terry Herter (Cornell)
Dorrit Hoffleit (Yale University)	1988	William van Altena (Yale University)
Steve Gregory (Univ. Of New Mexico)	1987	Ralph Alpher (Union College)
Ben Peery (Howard University)	1987	
Harry Shipman (Univ. Of Delaware)	1986	David Tytler (Columbia)
David Helfand (Columbia)	1986	Bruce Elmegreen (IBM)
Ray White (Steward Observatory)	1985	C. M. Leung (R.P.I.)
Steve Beckwith (Cornell)	1985	Donald Hayes (KPNO)
Robert Zinn (Yale University)	1984	B. Carroll & H. Van Horn (U. Roch.)
B. Paczynski (Princeton)	1984	Jonathon Grindlay (Harvard)
Daniel Weedman (Penn. St. Univ.)	1983	Eric Rydgren (R.P.I.)
Edwin Salpeter (Cornell)	1983	John Bahcall (Inst. for Adv. Study)
Chris Dainty (Cornell)	1982	Pierre Demarque (Yale University)
Marc Kutner (R.P.I.)	1982	Amos Yahil (SUNYSB)
Joseph Veverka (Cornell)	1982	
Tony Aveni (Colgate)	1981	William Forrest (Univ. of Rochester)
Saul Teukolsky (Cornell)	1981	S. F. Dermott (Cornell)
Joseph Veverka (Cornell)	1980	Davis Philip (Dudley Obs.)
Jonathan Gradie (Cornell)	1980	Dennis Butler (Yale University)
David de Young (KPNO)	1980	

Allen Sweigart (NASA)	1979	Yervant Terzian (Cornell)
Judith Pipher (Rochester)	1979	David Helfand (Columbia)
Donald Hayes (Arizona State Univ.)	1978	Arthur Uppgren (Van Vleck Obs.)
Joseph Veverka (Cornell)	1978	Robert Harrington (US Naval Obs.)
Malcolm Savedoff (Univ. of Rochester)	1977	Pierre Demarque (Yale University)
William Liller (Harvard)	1977	Thomas Gold (Cornell University)
Beatrice Tinsley (Yale University)	1976	
Jerimiah Ostriker (Princeton)	1976	
Vera Rubin (Dept. Terrestrial Mag.)	1975	John Mather (NASA)
	1975	Sidney van den Bergh (DAO)
	1974	Bertram Donn (Cornell)
	1974	Philip Solomon (SUNYSB)
	1973	Oliver Schaeffer (SUNYSB)
	1972	Joseph Veverka (Cornell)
	1972	Mayo Greenberg (SUNYA)

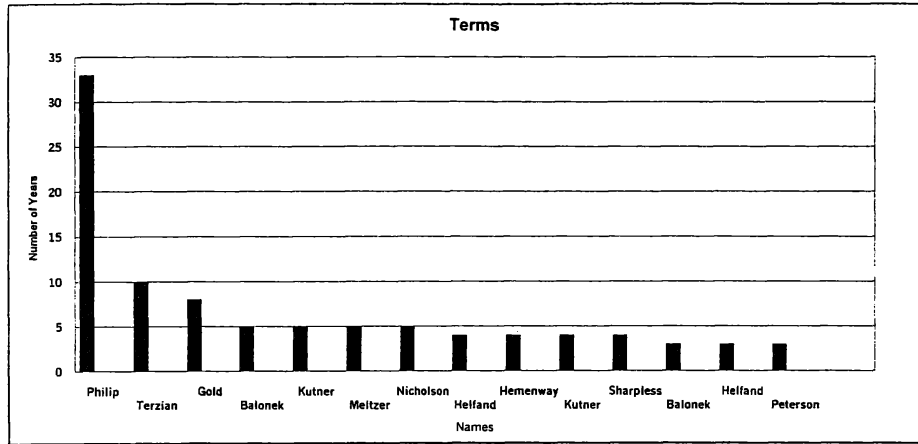


Fig. 1. The terms of the officers of NYAC from 1968 - 2001

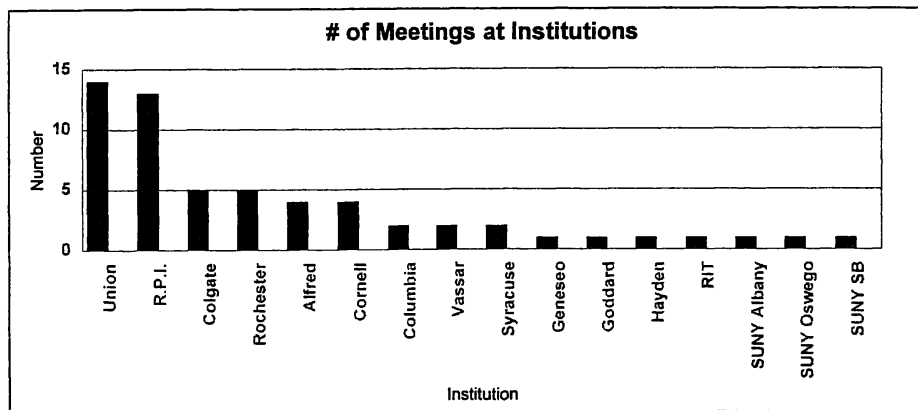


Fig. 2. The number of meetings at NYAC Institutions.

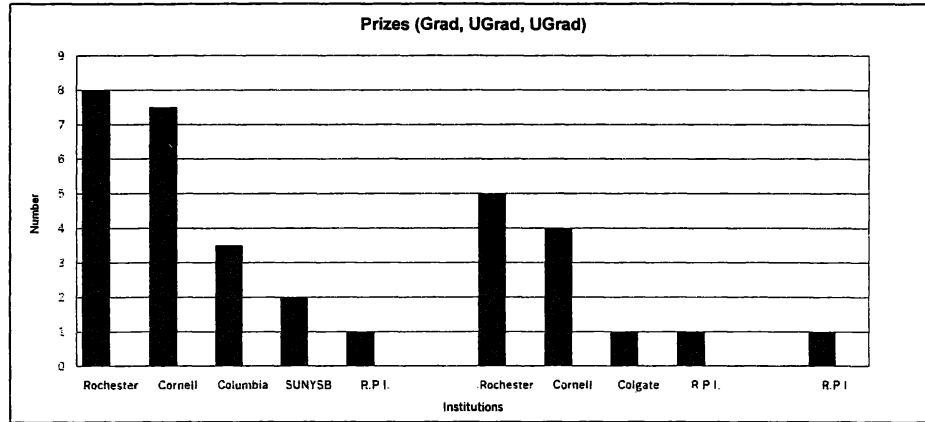


Fig. 3. The distribution of the ASNY Prizes by Institution.

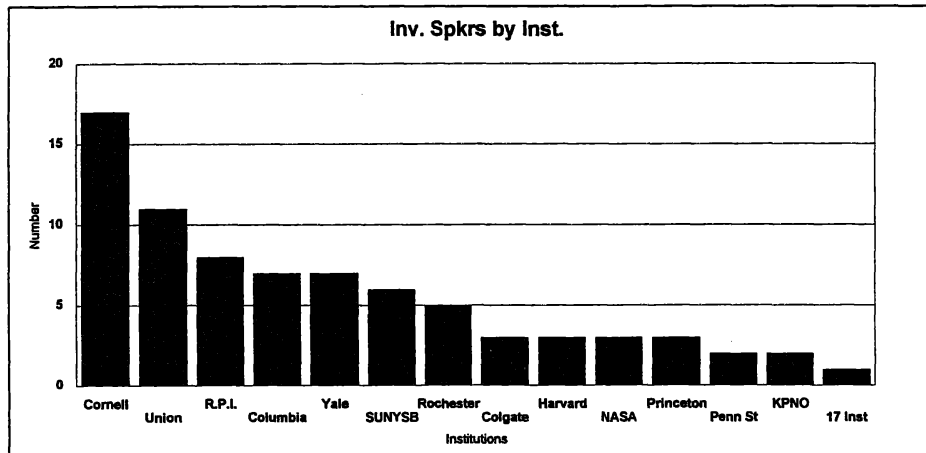


Fig. 4. The distribution of Invited Speakers by Institution.

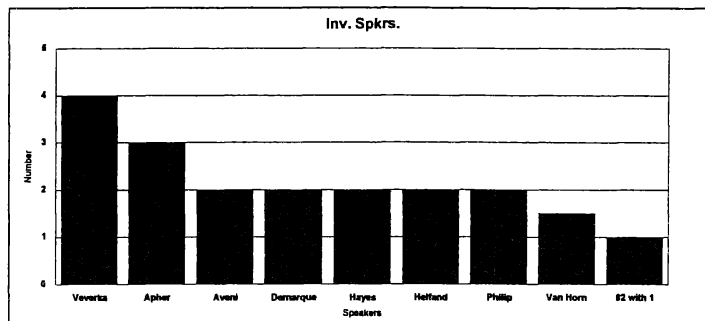


Fig. 5. The Invited Speakers who have given the most papers.

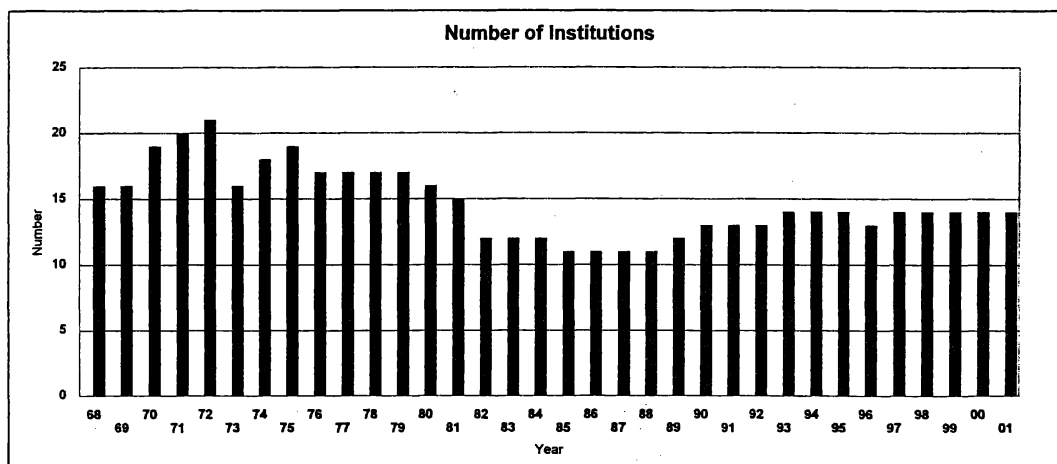


Fig. 6. The number of institutions which are members, by year.

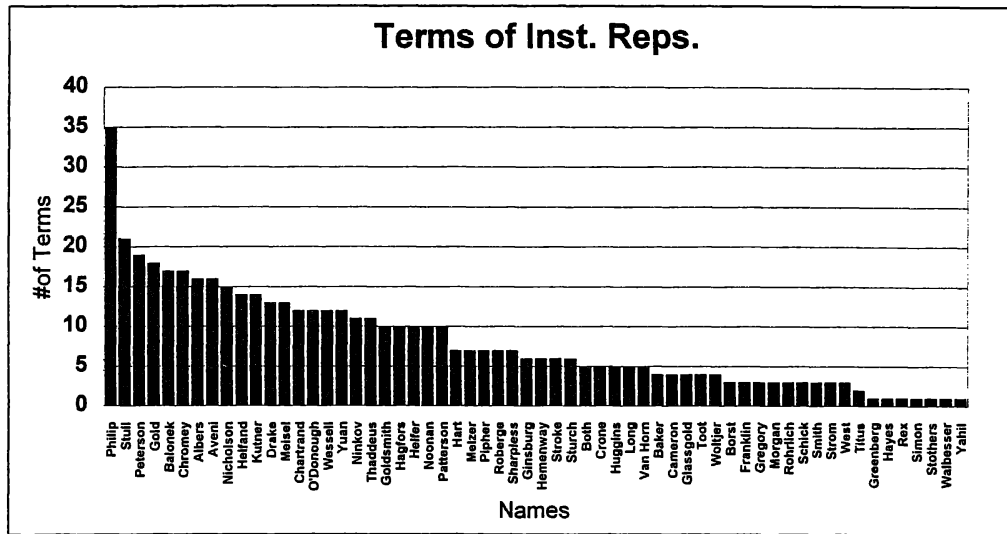


Fig. 7 The number of terms of Institutional Representatives of NYAC.

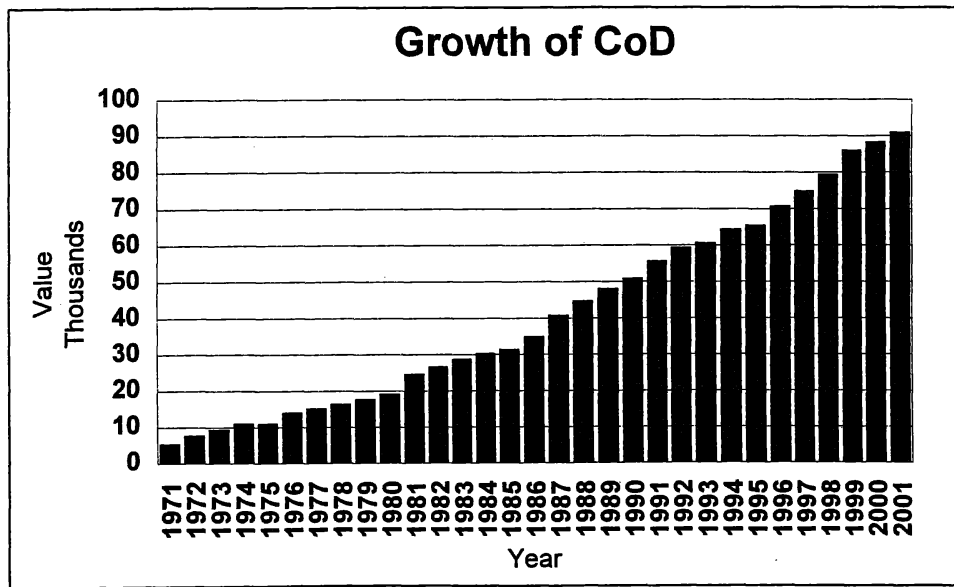


Fig. 8. The growth of funds in the CoDs from 1971 - 2001.