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Marie Curie Visits the National Academy of Sciences Building



**CELEBRATING THE CENTENNIAL
OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF
SCIENCES BUILDING, 1924–2024.**

A photograph captures a historic moment on the back steps of the National Academy of Sciences building: Marie Curie, codiscoverer of radium and polonium, stands alongside President Herbert Hoover in the fall of 1929. The president had presented her with a gift of \$50,000, earmarked for purchasing a gram of radium for her oncology institute in Warsaw, Poland. The gift was the result of a fundraising campaign led by American journalist Marie Meloney, after her article in *The Delineator*, a popular women's magazine, reported that Curie could not continue her groundbreaking research without more of the expensive element.

Curie, a Polish-born physicist and chemist, is renowned for her work on radioactivity. Not only was she the first woman to win a Nobel Prize, but she was also the first person to win a Nobel Prize twice in two scientific fields—physics in 1903 and chemistry in 1911. Her research led to the development of nuclear energy and radiotherapy for cancer treatment. Five years after her visit to the National Academy of Sciences, Curie died from leukemia, likely the direct result of her prolonged radiation exposure. Her life, while marked by tragic irony, continues to inspire generations with her unwavering dedication to science.

Madame Marie Curie and US President Herbert Hoover at the NAS Building, October 30, 1929. NAS Archives.