

# Preface to the Ninth Printing

The enthusiastic reception accorded the "Handbook of Mathematical Functions" is little short of unprecedented in the long history of mathematical tables that began when John Napier published his tables of logarithms in 1614. Only four and one-half years after the first copy came from the press in 1964, Myron Tribus, the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Science and Technology, presented the 100,000th copy of the Handbook to Lee A. DuBridge, then Science Advisor to the President. Today, total distribution is approaching the 150,000 mark at a scarcely diminished rate.

The success of the Handbook has not ended our interest in the subject. On the contrary, we continue our close watch over the growing and changing world of computation and to discuss with outside experts and among ourselves the various proposals for possible extension or supplementation of the formulas, methods and tables that make up the Handbook.

In keeping with previous policy, a number of errors discovered since the last printing have been corrected. Aside from this, the mathematical tables and accompanying text are unaltered. However, some noteworthy changes have been made in Chapter 2: Physical Constants and Conversion Factors, pp. 6-8. The table on page 7 has been revised to give the values of physical constants obtained in a recent reevaluation; and pages 6 and 8 have been modified to reflect changes in definition and nomenclature of physical units and in the values adopted for the acceleration due to gravity in the revised Potsdam system.

The record of continuing acceptance of the Handbook, the praise that has come from all quarters, and the fact that it is one of the most-quoted scientific publications in recent years are evidence that the hope expressed by Dr. Astin in his Preface is being amply fulfilled.

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