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**The Disappearing Fourth Wall: John Marburger, Science Policy, and the SSC**

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John H. Marburger (1941-2011) was a skilled science administrator who had a fresh and unique approach to science policy and science leadership. His posthumously published book *Science Policy up Close* contains recollections of key science policy episodes in which he participated or observed closely. One was the administration of the Superconducting Supercollider (SSC); Marburger was Chairman of the Universities Research Association, the group charged with managing the SSC, from 1988-1994. Many accounts of the SSC saga attribute its demise to a combination of transitory factors: poor management, rising cost estimates, the collapse of the Soviet Union and thus of the Cold War threat, complaints by “small science” that the SSC’s “big science” was consuming their budget, Congress’s desire to cut spending, unwarranted contract regulations imposed by the Department of Energy (DOE) in response to environmental lapses at nuclear weapons laboratories, and so forth. Marburger tells a subtler story whose implications for science policy are more significant and far-reaching. The story involves changes in the attitude of the government towards large scientific projects that reach back to management reforms introduced by the administration of Presidents Johnson, Nixon, and Carter in the 1960s and 1970s. This experience impressed Marburger with the inevitability of public oversight of large scientific projects, and with the need for planners of such projects to establish and make public a cost and schedule tracking system that would model the project’s progress and expenditures.