THE BECKMAN CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY

EARL L. WARRICK

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

James J. Bohning

in

Midland, Michigan

on

16 January 1986

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

THE BECKMAN CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY

Oral History Program

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(Signature) Earl L. Warrick

Dr. Earl L. Warrick

(Date) February 11, 1991

Chemical Heritage Foundation
Oral History Program
315 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

EARL LEATHEN WARRICK

1911 Born in Butler, Pennsylvania on 23 September

Education

Carnegie Institute of Technology

1933 B.S., chemistry
1934 M.S., physical chemistry
1943 Sc.D., physical chemistry

Professional Experience

1933-1934 Teaching Assistant, chemistry, Carnegie Institute of Technology
1934-1935 Teaching Assistant, chemistry, Brown University
1935-1937 Assistant, Mellon Institute
1937-1946 Fellow, organo-silicon chemistry, Mellon Institute
1943-1945 Instructor, mathematics, Carnegie Institute of Technology
1946-1955 Senior Fellow, Mellon Institute
1947-1948 Instructor, chemistry, University of Pittsburgh
1955-1956 Administrative Fellow, Mellon Institute

Dow Corning Corporation

1956-1959 Assistant Director of Research
1959-1962 Manager, Hyper-Pure Silicon Division
1962-1968 General Manager, Electronic Products Division
1968-1972 Manager, New Products Business
1972-1976 Senior Management Consultant

Saginaw Valley State College

1979-1980 Interim Dean, Science, Engineering and Technology
1983-1984 Interim Dean, Science, Engineering and Technology
1984- Special Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs

Honors

1976 Goodyear Medal, Rubber Division, American Chemical Society

ABSTRACT

Earl L. Warrick begins the interview with a description of his parents and childhood, which involved frequent moves between cities. He remembers a seventh grade teacher who inspired his interest in chemical engineering by having him build a one-tube radio. He tells of his undergraduate years at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, where the chemical engineering department was a bit disappointing. This led him to switch to physical chemistry, in which he received a master's degree. After recounting his year at Brown, Warrick describes his experiences at the Mellon Institute, where he developed a glass coating. He received his Sc.D. for a kinetic study carried out almost exclusively on nights and weekends while he continued work at Mellon. Warrick summarizes his career at Dow Corning, including the development of the "200 fluid," extensive rubber, polymer, and silicone research, his invention of "Silly Putty," and his work with silicon. He mentions the influence of several colleagues, especially McGregor, Collings, Hyde, Bass, and Speier. Warrick concludes by commenting on his position at Saginaw Valley State College, his current writing, and the changes that have occurred in chemistry throughout his career.

INTERVIEWER

James J. Bohning, Assistant Director for Oral History at the Beckman Center, holds the B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in chemistry. He was a member of the chemistry faculty at Wilkes University from 1959 until 1990, where he served as chair of the Chemistry Department for sixteen years, and chair of the Earth and Environmental Sciences Department for three years. He was Chair of the Division of the History of Chemistry of the American Chemical Society in 1987, and has been associated with the development and management of the Center's oral history program since 1985.

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