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F O U N D A T I O N

DALE B. BAKER

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

Robert V. Williams and Leo B. Slater

at

Columbus, Ohio

on

9 June 1997

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

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Oral History Program
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DALE B. BAKER

1920 Born in Bucyrus, Ohio, on 19 September

Education

1942 B.Ch.E., The Ohio State University
1948 M.Sc., The Ohio State University

Professional Experience

1942-1945 Chemist-Supervisor, E. I. DuPont de Nemours & Company

Chemical Abstracts Service

1946-1950 Assistant Editor
1951-1957 Associate Editor
1958 Associate Director
1958-1986 Director

American Chemical Society, Columbus, Ohio, Office

1965-1966 Acting Executive
1972 Acting Manager
1980 Chief Operating Officer
1983-1986 Deputy Executive Director
1986-present Director Emeritus

Honors

1968 Boss of the Year, Columbus Junior Chamber of Commerce
1968 Technical Man of the Year, Columbus Technical Council
1968 Man of the Day, WCOL Radio Station
1970 Alumni Centennial Award, OSU Alumni Association
1970 Distinguished Alumnus Award, OSU College of Engineering
1971 Twenty-five year Service Award, American Chemical Society
1973 Man of the Day, WCOL Radio Station
1974 Miles G. Conrad Award, NFAIS
1977 Doctor of Sacology, US Air Force, Strategic Air Command, Offutt AFB,
Nebraska
1979 Patterson-Crane Award, American Chemical Society
1983 Award of Merit, American Society of Information Science

- 1986 Directors, Officers, Councilors, Management, and Staff Award on Retirement
American Chemical Society
- 1986 Honorary Ph.D., The Ohio State University
- 1986 Herman Skolnik Award, ACS Division of Chemical Information
- 1987-present Honorary Fellowship, Royal Society of Chemistry
- 1991 Hall of Fame Inductee, Ohio Science, Technology & Industry
- 1992 Professional Achievement Award, OSU Alumni Association
- 1993 Distinguished Service Award, ACS Board of Directors
- 1997 Honorary Chairman, ACS Cols. Sect. Centennial (1897-1997)

ABSTRACT

Dale Baker begins the interview with a discussion of his early years and family background. Inspired by a high school teacher, Baker decided to major in chemical engineering upon entering Ohio State University in 1938, receiving his B.Ch.E. in 1942 and his M.Sc. in chemistry in 1948. While a student, Baker began working for the American Chemical Society's [ACS] *Chemical Abstracts Service* as an office boy. Aside from a brief time as a chemist working with explosives at DuPont, Baker spent his entire career with the ACS and *Chemical Abstracts Service*. In 1946, Baker became assistant editor of *Chemical Abstracts*. He took on the extra responsibilities of managing the publications' finances and administrative coordination. Baker and his staff at *Chemical Abstracts* learned indexing and abstracting through hands-on work while seeking to automate and quicken the availability of chemical information. In 1958, Baker became Director of *Chemical Abstracts Service*, a position he held until 1986. Baker was instrumental in developing an on-line system for *Chemical Abstracts* in the early 1980s. While Director of *Chemical Abstracts Service*, Baker also served the ACS in various capacities, from Acting Executive to Director Emeritus. Baker concludes the interview with a discussion of management techniques, and reflections on his career and family.

INTERVIEWER

Robert V. Williams is a professor of library and information science at the University of South Carolina. He holds a Ph.D. in library and information studies from the University of Wisconsin, Madison; an MS in library and information science from Florida State University; and an MA in history from New York University. Before joining the University of South Carolina in 1978, he was an archivist and information services manager for the Ford Foundation, and the Georgia Department of Archives and History. Williams has also been an information consultant for various organizations including Appalachian Council of Governments of Greenville, South Carolina and Pontifical Catholic University Madre y Maestra, Dominican Republic. He came to the Chemical Heritage Foundation as the Eugene Garfield Fellow in the History of Scientific Information in 1997. He is a member of the South Carolina Historical Records Advisory Board, the American Library Association (ALA), and the American Society for Information Science (ASIS), where he served as chair of ASIS History and Foundations of Information Science Special Interest Group in 1994-1995. Williams is also a member of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) and Chair of the SLA Membership Committee. Williams has numerous publications on the historical role of information science.

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