

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

E.N. (NED) BRANDT

Transcript of Interviews
Conducted by

James J. Bohning

in

Midland, Michigan

on

17 June 1992

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION
Oral History Program
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ELLIS N. (NED) BRANDT

1922 Born in Detroit, Michigan, on 16 May

Education

1943 B.A., Journalism, Michigan State University
1943-1946 Military Service, U.S. Army

Professional Experience

1946-1947 United Press International, Detroit, Michigan
1947-1949 Literary Critic, French Broadcasting System; Editor, *Export Import Journal*
1949-1953 Press Attaché, U.S. Embassy, Paris, France
The Dow Chemical Company
1953-1956 Public Relations Staff
1956-1961 Public Relations Manager, Michigan Division
1961-1965 Assistant Director of Public Relations
1965-1970 Director of Public Relations
1970-1978 Director of Business Communications
1978-1986 Senior Counselor of Public Affairs
1983-present Company Historian

Honors

Brandt Professorship, Michigan State University
Director, Michigan Chapter, Public Relations Society of America
Chairman, Public Relations Committee, Chemical Manufacturers Association
The Golden Workshop
President, Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education
Chairman, Public Relations Seminar, National Organization of Corporate Public Relations Directors
Committee to Re-Elect the President (Nixon)
The Wise Men
Secretary, Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation
Secretary, Pardee Foundation

Vice President, Midland Foundation
Member, Board of Directors, Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation
Vice President and Secretary, Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation
Council of Michigan Foundations
Chairman, Michigan Division Council, American Red Cross
Chairman, Hall of Ideas Management Council, Midland Center
for the Arts
Midland County Historical Society
Historical Society of Michigan
President, Saginaw Valley Torch Club
Rotary International

ABSTRACT

E.N. (Ned) Brandt, company historian of The Dow Chemical Company and a major figure in Dow's public relations activities for over three decades, begins the interview by touching on his family background and early education, before recalling his activities in news writing positions during high school and journalism school at Michigan State. Brandt joined a quartermaster ROTC unit in 1941, went through Officer Candidate School, and in 1944 volunteered for overseas duty. He describes several interesting experiences during the war in France when he was an intelligence officer and a public relations officer. After a brief stint with UPI in Detroit, Brandt returned to France and worked for the French broadcasting system and the State Department at the Paris embassy. He discusses his work in France, art studies in Paris, and travels to Algeria. In 1953 Brandt resigned from the foreign service and joined Dow. This section of the interview includes recollections of Dow's early public relations department and Bud Smith, and work with Bill Schuette as public relations manager of the newly created Midland Division. Brandt next discusses his concerns as assistant director and then director of public relations in the 1960s, including such topics as Dow's global reorganization in 1965, speech writing for Dow's top executives, environmental issues, *The Dow Story*, and outside involvement with public affairs organizations. In describing his activities during the 1970s and 1980s, Brandt talks about a visit to Chile, public relations in South Africa, difficulties with Mark Batterson during Zoltan Merszei's tenure as president of Dow, the TV Hot Box, the origins of Dow's history function and the Dow archives, his own decision to retire, and the Futures Initiative. The closing segments of the transcript focus on Brandt's outside activities, especially for historical societies and foundations.

INTERVIEWER

James J. Bohning, assistant director for oral history at the Chemical Heritage Foundation, holds 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 Science History Consultants' oral history program since 1985.

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