

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

PAUL M. DOTY

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

Raymond C. Ferguson

at

Harvard University

on

17 November 1986

(With Subsequent Additions and Deletions)

THE BECKMAN CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY

Oral History Program

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PAUL M. DOTY

1920 Born in Charleston, West Virginia, on 1 June

Education

1941 B.S., chemistry, Pennsylvania State College
1944 Ph.D., chemistry, Columbia University

Professional Experience

1943-1945 Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn
Projects Instructor, Research Associate and Co-Director of Quartermaster
1945-1946 Assistant Professor of Physical Chemistry

1947-1948 University of Notre Dame
Assistant Professor of Chemistry

1948-1950 Harvard University
Assistant Professor of Chemistry
1950-1956 Associate Professor of Chemistry
1956-1968 Professor of Chemistry
1967-1970 Chairman, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

1968- Mallinckrodt Professor of Biochemistry

Honors

1946-1947 Rockefeller Fellow, Cambridge University, England
1950-1951 Guggenheim Fellow, held in 1958, Cambridge University
1950 Fellow, American Academy of Arts and Sciences
1955 Priestly Lecturer, Pennsylvania State University
1956 Award in Pure Chemistry, American Chemical Society
1956 Edgar Fahs Smith Lecturer, University of Pennsylvania
1957 Elected Member, National Academy of Sciences
1959 Harrison Howe Lecturer, University of Rochester

1960	Harvey Lecturer
1961-1965	Member, President's Science Advisory Committee
1963	Senior Fellow, Society of Fellows, Harvard University
1966	D.Sc., University of Chicago
1967	Gold Medal Award, City College Chemistry Alumni Association
1970	Fellow, American Philosophical Society
1971	Robertson Memorial Lecturer, National Academy of Sciences
1972	Dedication Lecture, Mitsubishi-Kasei Institute of Life Sciences, Tokyo
1973	25th Anniversary Lecture, Brandeis University
1973	J. T. Donald Lecture in Chemistry, McGill University
1975	Foreign Member, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts

ABSTRACT

Paul Doty begins by describing his family's background and his early education in Western Pennsylvania. He also recalls attending the ACS national meeting while he was still a teenager. He describes his impressions of Pennsylvania State College under Frank Whitmore, and the influence of John G. [Jack] Aston. Examining his selection of Columbia University for graduate studies, Doty describes the famous scientists there at that time and the effects of World War II; next he discusses how thesis research in physical chemistry led to work on light scattering and polymers. He remembers his coworkers, including Bruno Zimm and Turner Alfrey, and his postdoc in Eric Rideal's laboratory at Cambridge University, where he was first drawn to research in biopolymers. Doty recounts his early research at Harvard University, including protein denaturation and renaturation, and describes his colleagues. He continues the interview with an account of the development of biochemistry at Harvard and his involvement in public service and activism in nuclear and international issues. Finally, Paul Doty reflects on national characteristics in academic policy.

INTERVIEWER

Raymond C. Ferguson obtained his degrees in chemistry from Iowa State University (B.S., M.S.) and Harvard University (Ph.D.). He worked in research divisions of the Organic Chemicals, Elastomer Chemicals, and Central Research Departments of DuPont, principally in molecular spectroscopy, organic structure analysis, and polymer characterization. Currently he is affiliated with CONDUX, Inc., a consulting association of former DuPont professionals.

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- 11 Rockefeller Fellowship at Cambridge University
European contacts. Early light scattering research.
- 17 Research at Harvard University
Synthetic polymer research. Consulting work for Union Carbide. Introduction of optical rotary dispersion method. Work on denaturation and renaturation of DNA. Work on protein synthesis. Work on mapping the collagen gene.
- 27 Professorship in Chemistry at Harvard University
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