

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

WILLIAM H. JOYCE

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

Arnold Thackray

at

Nalco Company
Naperville, Illinois

on

17 August 2004

(with subsequent additions and corrections)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This oral history is one in a series initiated by the Chemical Heritage Foundation on behalf of the Society of Chemical Industry (American Section). The series documents the personal perspectives of the Perkin and the Chemical Industry Award recipients and records the human dimensions of the growth of the chemical sciences and chemical processes industries during the twentieth century.

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Arnold Thackray and Scott Lockledge on 17 August 2004

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William H. Joyce

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WILLIAM H. JOYCE

1935 Born in Greensburg, Pennsylvania on December 15

Education

1957 B.S., chemical engineering, Pennsylvania State University
1971 M.B.A., New York University
1974 Ph.D., New York University

Professional Experience

Union Carbide Company
1957-1968 Product Development Engineer
1971-1974 Product Manager, Chemical and Plastics Group
1974-1976 Operations Manager
1976-1978 Director, Polyolefins Operations
1978-1979 Vice President, Marketing
1979-1979 Vice President, Licensing and Technology
1982-1985 President, Silicones and Urethane Intermediates Division
1985-1992 President, Polyolefins Division
1992-2001 Chief Operating Officer
1993-2001 President
1995-2001 Chief Executive Officer
1996-2001 Chairman of the Board

Hercules Incorporated
2000-2003 Chairman and Chief Executive Officer

Nalco Company
2003-present Chairman and Chief Executive Officer

Honors

1993 National Medal of Technology
1994 Industry Achievement Award, Plastics Academy
1997 Lifetime Achievement Award, Plastics Academy

1997 Inducted into the National Academy of Engineering
2003 Perkin Medal, Society of Chemical Industry
Chairman, Society of Plastics Industry
Board of Directors, Executive Committee, American Plastics Council
Board of Directors, Executive Committee, American Chemistry Council
Board of Directors, Executive Committee, Society of Chemical Industry
Board of Trustees, University Research Associates
Co-Chair, National Academies Research Roundtable
Chairman, Society of Plastics Engineers

ABSTRACT

William H. Joyce begins his interview with a description of his early childhood. As a young man, Joyce was significantly influenced by both his parents, in particular his father, who instilled in Joyce a strong knowledge of business. Throughout his childhood, Joyce was very active, participating in sports such as golf and skiing, but also had a strong interest in chemistry. Very early in his academic career, before high school even, Joyce decided to become a chemical engineer, and, with that in mind, participated in many school science fairs. With a Navy scholarship, Joyce was able to attend college at Penn State University. While at Penn State, Joyce participated in numerous extracurricular activities, but also took his studies very seriously and found his time there quite enjoyable. After graduating, Joyce accepted a position at Union Carbide as a product development engineer. While at Union Carbide, Joyce received numerous promotions and worked in various capacities, from the R&D side of industry to speech writing for chairmen. Throughout his career at Union Carbide, spanning over forty years, Joyce made several contributions to his field, working to create a new transoceanic telephone cable to the UNIPOL process for creating high-density polyethylene. After a short time at Hercules Incorporated, in 2003, Joyce began to work at Nalco Company, where he continues to use his energy to create new and innovative techniques and products to solve problems in the water treatment and processing chemicals industry. Joyce concludes his interview by discussing current events as related to the chemical industry.

INTERVIEWER

Arnold Thackray is president of the Chemical Heritage Foundation. He majored in the physical sciences before turning to the history of science, receiving a Ph.D. from Cambridge University in 1966. He has held appointments at Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, the Institute for Advanced Study, the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In 1983 he received the Dexter Award from the American Chemical Society for outstanding contributions to the history of chemistry. He served on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania for more than a quarter of a century. There, he was the founding chairman of the Department of History and Sociology of Science, where he is the Joseph Priestley Professor Emeritus.

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Navy scholarship. Chose Penn State over several Ivy League schools. Chemical engineering major. Lived on campus freshman year and at fraternity house following that. Many extracurricular activities including football manager.	
Union Carbide	13
Accepted job as Product Development Engineer directly after college. Worked on insulating materials. Electric Boat project. Transoceanic telephone cable. Bell Laboratories. Operate out of New York. Semi-conducting polyethylene. Night school at the New Jersey Institute of Technology and Stevens Institute of Technology. Promotion to Product Manager of Chemicals and Plastics. Receive M.B.A. Receive Ph.D. Operations Manager. High-density polyethylene.	
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Devised practical methods and solutions for creating high-density polyethylene. Improved wire and cable, as well as a molding material. Reverted cash-flow back into R&D.	
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