

THE BECKMAN CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY

MALCOLM E. PRUITT

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

James J. Bohning

at

Midland, Michigan

on

9 September 1988

Malcolm E.

Pruitt

JH
3/15/86

BECKMAN CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY

Oral History Program

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(Date)

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MALCOLM E. PRUITT

1915 Born in Hamilton, Texas on 15 October

Education

1941 B.S., chemistry, Abilene Christian University

Professional Experience

1936-1941 Hamilton County Public School, Texas
1941-1942 Clyde Independent Schools, Texas

Dow Chemical Company, Texas Division
1942-1943 Control Chemist
1943-1944 Research Chemist, Gas Laboratory
1944-1946 Research Chemist, Organic Laboratory
1946-1948 Project Leader
1948-1951 Group Leader
1951-1954 Laboratory Group Leader
1954-1962 Director, Organic Products Development Laboratory
1962-1967 Director of Product Research
1967-1971 Director of Research and Development
Dow Chemical USA
1971-1978 Director of Research & Development
Dow Chemical Company
1975-1980 Vice-President
1978-1980 Corporate Director of Research and Development

Council for Chemical Research
1980-1982 Chairman
1982- Honorary Chairman

Honors

1972 Alumni Citation, Abilene Christian University
1973 Honorary Doctor of Science, Abilene Christian University

1978 Industrial Research Institute Medal
1981 Society of Research Administrators Award
1982 Commercial Development Association Award
1983 Outstanding Alumnus, Abilene Christian University
1985 First Recipient of Mac Pruitt Award, Council for Chemical Research
1987 Earle Barnes Award, American Chemical Society

ABSTRACT

This short interview with Mac Pruitt is concerned with the Council for Chemical Research and starts with an account of the foundation meeting at Midland and its origins in Pruitt's fear that U.S. chemical technology was endangered by poor cooperation between university and industry. During the course of the interview, Pruitt describes the working of the task force he set up which eventually lead to the formal establishment of the Council. The relations with the American Chemical Society are briefly reviewed, the membership and the staffing of the Council outlined, and the meaning of the logo explained. The conversation ends with Pruitt's assessment of the success of the Council for Chemical Research over the first decade of its existence.

INTERVIEWER

James J. Bohning holds the B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in chemistry, and has been a member of the chemistry faculty at Wilkes College since 1959. He was chair of the Chemistry Department for sixteen years, and was appointed chair of the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences in 1988. He has been associated with the development and management of the oral history program at the Beckman Center since 1985, and was elected Chair of the Division of the History of Chemistry of the American Chemical Society for 1987.

NOTES

- (1) Logo of Council for Chemical Research. See BCHOC Oral History file #0081.
- (2) R. S. Karpuk, Dow Research Pioneers: Recollections (Midland, Michigan: Dow Chemical Company, 1984).

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