MALCOLM M. RENFREW

Transcript of an Interview Conducted by

James J. Bohning

at

New Orleans

on

31 August 1987

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

THE BECKMAN CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY

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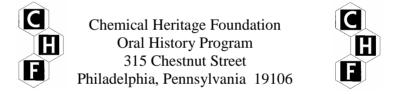
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MALCOLM M. RENFREW

1910	Born in Spokane, Washington on 12 October
	Education
1932	B.S., chemistry, University of Idaho
1934	M.S., chemistry, University of Idaho
1938	Ph.D., chemistry, University of Minnesota
	Professional Experience
	University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho
1932-1933	Fellow in Physics
1933-1935	Teaching assistant in Chemistry
1935-1937 1935-1938	University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota Teaching Assistant in Chemistry du Pont Fellow
1938-1944 1946-1946 1946-1948	E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co., Inc., Plastics Department, Arlington, N. J. Research Chemist Supervisor of Process Development Supervisor of Product Development
1949-1952 1952-1953 1953-1954	General Mills, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota Head of Chemical Research Department Director of Chemical Research Director of Chemical Research and Development
1954-1958	Spencer Kellogg and Sons, Inc., Buffalo, New York Director of Research and Development
	University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho
1959-1967	Head of Physical Science Department
1968-1973	Head of Chemistry Department
1959-1976	Professor of Chemistry
1976-	Professor Emeritus
1977-1978	Executive Vice President, Idaho Research
	Foundation, Inc
1978-1986	Patent Director, Idaho Research Foundation, Inc
	Honors
1976	Honorary D.Sc. University of Idaho
1976	Norris Award, Northeastern Section, American Chemical Society
1977	University of Idaho Alumni Hall of Fame
1977	College Chemistry Teacher Award, Manufacturing

Chemists Association

1977	University of Minnesota Alumni Achievement Award
1985	Division of Chemical Health and Safety Award,
	American Chemical Society
1986	Mosher Award, Santa Clara Valley Section, American Chemical Society

ABSTRACT

Malcolm Renfrew grew up in the northwest. Despite an early interest in music, drama, and the arts, Renfrew studied chemistry at the University of Idaho, in part influenced by a chemist uncle. After serving as a teaching assistant in both physics and chemistry and completing a Masters thesis, he joined George Glockler at Minnesota for research on Raman spectroscopy. He recalls contemporaries at both Moscow and Minneapolis as well as a summer spent on the road with a tent show. When Renfrew joined the Arlington laboratories of Du Pont he was much involved with plastics development, especially of Teflon and he recalls the enthusiastic interest aroused by the disclosure of its properties at an ACS meeting in 1946. Malcolm Renfrew has long had a special interest in health and safety in the chemical environment and he recounts laboratory accidents during the development of PTFE. After moving to General Mills and then to Spencer Kellogg, ascending the research management ladder, Renfrew went back to his alma mater in 1959 as head of physical science. He completes the interview with an account of his return to teaching.

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 a chair of the Chemistry Department for sixteen years, and was appointed chair of the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences since 1985, and was elected Chair of the Division of the History of Chemistry of the American Chemical Society for 1987.

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