

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

ROBERT A. ROLAND

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

James J. Bohning

at

Chemical Manufacturers Association
Washington, DC

on

14 March 1995

(With Subsequent Additions and Corrections)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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This project is made possible through the generosity of Society of Chemical Industry member companies.

THE CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION
Oral History Program

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ROBERT A. ROLAND

1931 Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on 14 January

Education

1952 B. S. economics, Villanova University
1955 L.L.B, University of Pennsylvania

Professional Experience

1955-1957 Ensign, U.S. Navy, U.S.S. Stribling, (DO867), Destroyer Fleet Atlantic
1957-1959 Lieutenant Jr. Grade, Contract Administration, General Stores Supply Office

National Paint And Coatings Association [NPCA]
1959-1961 Representative
1961-1971 Executive Vice President
1971-1978 President

1978-1993 Chemical Manufacturers Association
President

Honors

1994 International Medal, Society of Chemical Industry

ABSTRACT

The interview begins with Robert Roland describing his family background and early years in Upper Darby, PA, and the influence of his Catholic grade school and high school education. Next follows a brief account of Roland's years at Villanova University and the University of Pennsylvania School of Law, where Dean Jefferson B. Fordham played a strong role as Roland's mentor. The interview also examines Roland's career in the U.S. Navy, where his eventual experience as General Counsel and Contract Administrator influenced his professional views and development. The central portion of the interview focuses on Roland's appointment as president of the Chemical Manufacturers Association [CMA], the conditions under which he accepted that position, and the changes he made there. The interview emphasizes Roland's influence in making the CMA the focal point for the chemical industry in the U.S. and abroad, and his role in developing the industry's standards for safety, health, the environment, and management training, particularly CAER and Responsible Care. The closing discussion focuses on Roland's views on the industry's future, CMA's role and status, and his professional accomplishments and retirement.

INTERVIEWER

James J. Bohning is Professor of Chemistry Emeritus at Wilkes University, where he was a faculty member from 1959 to 1990. He served there as chemistry department chair from 1970 to 1986 and environmental science department chair from 1987 to 1990. He was chair of the American Chemical Society's Division of the History of Chemistry in 1986, received the Division's outstanding paper award in 1989, and presented more than twenty-five papers before the Division at national meetings of the Society. He has been on the advisory committee of the Society's National Historic Chemical Landmarks committee since its inception in 1992. He developed the oral history program of the Chemical Heritage Foundation beginning in 1985, and was the Foundation's Director of Oral History from 1990 to 1995. He currently writes for the American Chemical Society News Service.

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