

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

IRVING S. SHAPIRO

Transcript of an Interview  
Conducted by

James J. Bohning and Bernadette R. McNulty

in

Wilmington, Delaware

on

15 December 1994

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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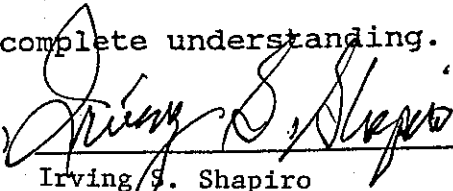
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## IRVING S. SHAPIRO

1916 Born in Minneapolis, MN, on 15 July

### Education

1939 B.S., pre-law, University of Minnesota

1941 L.L.B., University of Minnesota

### Professional Experience

1941 Attorney, private law practice  
1941-1943 Attorney, U. S. Office of Price Administration  
1943-1951 Attorney, Criminal Division, U.S. Department of Justice

E. I. DuPont de Nemours & Company, Inc.

1951-1965 Attorney, Legal Department  
1965-1970 Assistant General Counsel  
1970-1972 Vice President  
1970-1973 Director, Executive Committee Member  
1972-1974 Senior Vice President  
1973 Vice Chairman of the Board  
1974-1981 Chief Executive Officer, Chairman of the Board, Finance Committee  
Member, Chairman of Public Affairs Committee

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher, & Flom

1981-1990 Partner  
1990-present Of Counsel

### Honors

1979 Chemical Industry Medal, Society of Chemical Industry

## ABSTRACT

Irving Shapiro begins this interview by discussing his parents' backgrounds and the influence of his father's interest in law and accounting. Next Shapiro examines his own early intellectual strengths and proclivities and his undergraduate and law school performance. He describes the path which took him from a private practice in Minneapolis, to the U.S. Office of Price Administration during WWII, to the U.S. Department of Justice's Criminal Division, where his highly publicized work prosecuting the eleven Communists brought him to the attention of the DuPont legal department. Shapiro recalls how his appointment as a DuPont General Counsel heralded a new era for the company in terms of its attitude toward Jews. In considering his advancement to CEO, Shapiro emphasizes his relationships with Walter Carpenter, Crawford Greenewalt, and Charles McCoy, as well as his work with the industrial departments and in disputes involving General Motors, Ford Motors, and Ralph Nader. Next, while discussing his career as CEO, Shapiro explains how his management and communication practices impacted on public and internal views of DuPont and allowed talented employees to blossom. He touches on his relationships with Edward Kane and Edward Jefferson and his commitment to DuPont's research and development, and he speaks more generally of his views of foreign competition, business community relations with the media and government, the Business Roundtable, and his legacy to the history of DuPont. Finally, Shapiro describes his post-DuPont work at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher, & Flom and at the Howard Hughes Institute.

## INTERVIEWERS

James J. Bohning, formerly Assistant Director for Oral History at the Chemical Heritage Foundation, holds the B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in chemistry. He was a member of the chemistry faculty at Wilkes University from 1959 until 1990, where he served as chair of the Chemistry Department for sixteen years and as chair of the Earth and Environmental Sciences Department for three years. He was Chair of the Division of the History of Chemistry of the American Chemical Society in 1986, and has been associated with the development and management of the Foundation's oral history program from 1985 to 1995. He currently writes for the American Chemical Society News Service.

Bernadette McNulty, former Oral History Project Manager for the Chemical Heritage Foundation, holds a B.A. in communications and social work and an M.A. and Ph.D. in communications. She held several teaching and research-related appointments, including positions at Muhlenberg and Rowan Colleges and Temple University, before joining the Foundation's oral history program in 1994.

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## Notes

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