

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

WILLIAM WISHNICK

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

James J. Bohning

at

Witco Corporation
New York, New York

on

13 May 1991

(With Subsequent Additions and Corrections)

THE BECKMAN CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY
Oral History Program

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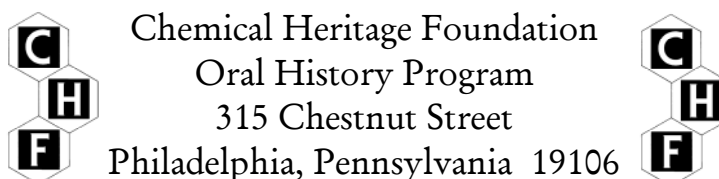
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WILLIAM WISHNICK

1924 Born in Brooklyn, New York on 9 November

Education

1949 B.A., business administration, University of Texas

Professional Experience

Witco Corporation

1949-1950 Manufacturing Department, Chicago, Illinois
1950-1951 Chief, Manufacturing Operations,
Perth Amboy, New Jersey
1951-1953 Sales Department, Organic Division, New York
1953-1955 Vice President and Treasurer
1955-1960 Executive Vice President
1960-1964 Vice Chairman of the Board
1964-1990 Chairman of the Board
1971-1975 President
1971-1990 Chief Executive Officer

Honors

1989 D. Eng. (honorary), Polytechnic University

ABSTRACT

William Wishnick begins this interview by describing his parents' careers and the founding of the Wishnick-Tumpeer Chemical Company in 1920. His father's company—now called Witco—expanded with the acquisition of several domestic and international companies and went public in 1958. After serving in the military and completing his education, Wishnick began working for the company in 1949. Wishnick served as vice president and treasurer, executive vice president, president, and chairman of the board and chief operating officer until his retirement in 1990. Wishnick discusses how the company grew with the addition of manufacturing and marketing, the purchase of other companies, and the diversification of product lines. Wishnick concludes the interview by discussing how the nature of doing business has changed over the years.

INTERVIEWER

James J. Bohning, 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 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 Foundations's oral history program since 1985.

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- 17 Education
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- 20 Chicago
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- 25 Building the Company
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- 33 Retirement
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- 40 Business Yesterday and Today
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NOTES

1. William Wishnick, The Witco Story (New York: The Newcomen Society, 1976).
2. Letter from Robert I. Wishnick to Mr. C. K. Schwartz (Gottlieb and Schwartz), dated 22 October 1943. Copy in Chemical Heritage Foundation oral history research file #0093.
3. Thomas Burdick, Blue Thunder: How the Mafia Owned and Finally Destroyed Cigarette Boat King Donald Aronow (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990).

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