

SCIENCE HISTORY INSTITUTE

**DENNIS GILLINGS**

Life Sciences Foundation

Transcript of a Research Interview  
Conducted by

Brian Dick

in

San Diego, California

on

20 February 2014

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION  
Center for Oral History  
FINAL RELEASE FORM

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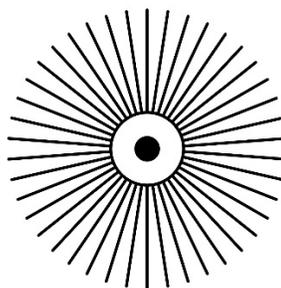
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## INTERVIEWEE

**Dennis Gillings** was born in London, England near the end of World War II. His father was a wholesale fish merchant who fought in the D-Day invasion, while his mother was a homemaker and milliner. During his adolescence, Gillings attended the Coopers' Company School. He received his bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University of Exeter and then received his diploma in mathematical statistics from Cambridge University. Gillings returned to the University of Exeter for his PhD, where his thesis was on mathematical models in health services. In 1971, Gillings was hired by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to be an assistant professor in biostatistics. After a road trip across the African continent, Gillings left England for the United States. At Chapel Hill, Gillings became the associate director of the campus's health services research center. He was approached by the pharmaceutical company Hoechst-Roussel to help them introduce their anti-sulfonylurea to the United States. This inspired Gillings to create a program at Chapel Hill in which graduate students would be paid to assist him in his consulting work.

Gillings continued his consulting work alongside his professorship until 1988, when he left Chapel Hill to form his own clinical research company, Quintiles. The company's focus was primarily on analysis and data management, eventually expanding across the United States and then to Europe in 1993. Gillings took Quintiles public in 1994, after which Pamela Kirby replaced Gillings as the CEO. After economic issues, though, Gillings returned as CEO and privatized the company again. Quintiles continued to grow, seeing its revenue grow three times and its profits five times when the company went public again in February 2013. Gillings's work and service to the pharmaceutical industry was honored in 2004 when he was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

## INTERVIEWER

**Brian Dick** received his PhD in sociology from the University of California, Davis. Before coming to the Institute he was a research associate at the Life Sciences Foundation. His research interests include the history of agricultural biotechnology, the emergence of the biotech industry, and the Human Genome Project.

## ABOUT THIS TRANSCRIPT

Staff of the Life Sciences Foundation conducted this interview, which became a part of our collections upon the merger of the Chemical Heritage Foundation and the Life Sciences Foundation into the Science History Institute in 2018. The Center for Oral History at the Science History Institute edited and formatted this transcript to match our style guide, but, as noted, Science History Institute staff members did not conduct the interview.

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