

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

**THE TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL ACT:  
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF  
MARILYN C. BRACKEN**

Transcript of Interviews  
Conducted by

Jody A. Roberts and Kavita D. Hardy

at

Institute for Defense Analyses  
Alexandria, Virginia

on

5 March 2010

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

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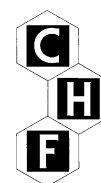
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## MARILYN C. BRACKEN

1935 Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on 5 November

### Education

1957 B.S., Chemistry, Carnegie Institute of Technology  
1967 M.A., Public Administration: Technology of Management, American University  
1971 Ph.D., Public Administration: Technology of Management, American University

### Professional Experience

1957-1958 Melpar, Inc., Falls Church, Virginia  
Chemist

1962-1964 National Bureau of Standards, Washington, D.C.  
Chemist

1971-1973 Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.  
Information Systems Analyst, Office of Information Systems

1973-1976 Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, D.C.  
Division Director, Division of Scientific Coordination, Bureau of Biomedical Sciences

1976-1977 The MITRE Corporation, McLean, Virginia  
Associate Department Head, Environmental Chemistry and Biology

1977-1978 Department Head, Energy and Environmental Information Systems

1978-1980 U.S Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, D.C.  
Deputy Assistant Administrator for Program Integration and Information, Office of Pesticides and Toxic Substances

1980-1983 Associate Assistant Administrator for Toxics Integration, Office of Pesticides and Toxic Substances

1983-1988 Environmental Testing and Certification Corporation, Edison, New Jersey  
Vice President of Product Testing and Liability

1988-1989	Metcalf and Eddy, Wakefield, Massachusetts Senior Vice President for Special Projects
1988-1991	Metcalf & Eddy de Puerto Rico, Inc., San Juan, Puerto Rico President
1991-1992	Air and Water Technologies, Inc., Miami, Florida President, South Region
1992-1993	Air and Water Technologies, Inc., Washington, D.C. Senior Vice President, Federal Programs
1993-1994	Paragon Global Services, Ltd., Fairfax, Virginia President
1993-1994	Applied Biosciences International, Inc., Fairfax, Virginia Vice President, Marketing and Business Development
1994-Present	Bracken Associates, LLC, Washington, D.C. President and General Manager
1996-2005	Institute for Defense Analyses, Alexandria, Virginia Adjunct Research Staff Member, Systems Evaluation Division
2005-Present	Adjunct Research Staff Member, Operations Evaluation Division

### Honors

1966-1970	National Institutes of Health Graduate Trainee Fellowship
1976	Chairman's Special Citation, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
1978	Distinguished Alumna Award, American University
1980	Presidential Rank Award, Meritorious Executive, U.S. Government
1981	Fellow, American Association for Advancement of Science
2002	Fellow, Society of American Military Engineers

## ABSTRACT

**Marilyn C. Bracken's** oral history interview begins with a discussion about the relationship between her family life and early career. Once Bracken became a mother, she transitioned out of the laboratory and began pursuing graduate work in information science. She worked for and with several government agencies before joining EPA's Office of Toxic Substances as the deputy assistant administrator (DAA) for program information and toxic integration. Her responsibilities in program information included creating the TSCA Inventory, where the office decided to use the Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS) to assign unique identities to chemicals. She was also involved in developing Section 8 rules, and supporting industry efforts to develop internal reporting mechanisms. Internationally, she participated in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) discussions to facilitate data sharing and develop a "base set" of data for new chemicals. As the DAA for toxic integration, Bracken was responsible for facilitating interagency and intra-agency data sharing. From Bracken's perspective, EPA's culture of stovepiping, a lack of coordination throughout the administration, and procedural burdens within TSCA severely hampered any effort to create a holistic chemicals regulation policy, and Congress was critical of EPA's performance. After the change in administration and the arrival of Anne M. Gorsuch as administrator, Bracken left the EPA because of the lack of administrative support.

Bracken believes that TSCA was unique in its authority to be a regulatory catchall with the ability to prevent pollution before it happened. She emphasized the role that access to information, both by the government and the public, plays in effectively carrying out that authority. She discussed the challenge that nanotechnology presents to the CAS system of chemical identity that she developed. Bracken argues that the procedural burdens to EPA action must also be addressed in a TSCA reform process, specifically proving "unreasonable risk" and the limitations around confidential business information (CBI). She concludes with a discussion of the changing language of "safety," and the significance of the Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances changing its name to the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention.

## INTERVIEWERS

**Jody A. Roberts** is the Associate Director for the Center for Contemporary History and Policy and the Manager of the Environmental History and Policy Program at the Chemical Heritage Foundation. Roberts received his Ph.D. and M.S. in Science and Technology Studies from Virginia Tech and holds a B.S. in Chemistry from Saint Vincent College. His research focuses on the intersections of regulation, innovation, environmental issues, and emerging technologies within the chemical sciences.

**Kavita D. Hardy** is a research assistant in the Environmental History and Policy Program at the Chemical Heritage Foundation. She received a B.A. in Chemistry and Economics from Swarthmore College.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Education, Early Career, and Family Life	1
Chemistry. Children. NIH grant in information science. Department of Agriculture. Consumer Product Safety Commission. MITRE Corporation.	
Office of Toxic Substances: Program Information	2
TSCA Inventory. Use of CAS system. Development of Section 8 rules. Industry reporting mechanisms. International development of a “base set” for new chemicals.	
Office of Toxic Substances: Toxics Integration	12
Interagency cooperation. Prioritization. Section 9. Lack of mandate. Procedural hurdles. EPA culture of stovepiping. Interagency Testing Committee.	
Implementation and Leaving EPA	18
Science of structure-activity relationships. Congressional oversight. Lack of administrative support.	
Toxic Substances Control Act Reform	21
Pollution prevention. Information as the key to regulation. Nanotechnology. CBI. Procedural hurdles. “Unreasonable risk” vs. “safety.”	
Index	29

## INDEX

### A

AAAS. *See* American Association for the Advancement of Science  
ACS. *See* American Chemical Society  
American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), 2  
American Chemical Society (ACS), 2, 5  
American University, 1

### B

Brussels, Belgium, 12

### C

Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1  
Carnegie Institute of Technology. *See* Carnegie Mellon University  
Carnegie Mellon University, 1, 23  
CAS. *See* Chemical Abstracts Services  
CBI. *See* Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA): confidential business information  
CDC. *See* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 4, 7, 15  
CEQ. *See* Council on Environmental Quality  
Chemical Abstracts Services (CAS), 2, 3, 5, 17, 22, 23  
CAS Number, 3, 5, 6, 8, 23, 25  
Chemical Substances Information Network (CSIN), 2, 7  
Clean Air Act, 9, 12, 14, 15, 21  
Clean Water Act, 9, 12, 14, 15  
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), 13  
Congress, 11, 19, 20  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, 19

Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, 19

Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), 1, 2, 15, 23  
Costle, Douglas M., 11, 13, 14, 15  
Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), 2  
CPSC. *See* Consumer Product Safety Commission  
CSIN. *See* Chemical Substances Information Network

### D

Davies, J. Clarence "Terry", 14, 23  
Dow Chemical Company, 10, 12, 19  
DuPont. *See* E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company

### E

E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company, 10  
EC. *See* European Community  
EPA. *See* U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
European Commission, 3, 4, 8, 11, 12  
European Community (EC), 4, 9, 11, 12, 15

### F

FDA. *See* Food and Drug Administration  
Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), 15, 24  
FIFRA. *See* Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act  
Food and Drug Administration (FDA), 15, 23, 24, 26

### G

George Washington University, 1  
Gordon Research Conferences, 18  
Gorsuch, Anne M., 20

### H

Harvard University, 1



## I

Interagency Testing Committee, 15

## J

Jackson, Lisa P., 25

Japan, 9, 11

Jellinek, Steven D., 2, 3, 15, 16, 19

## M

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Research and Engineering (MITRE), 2, 7

Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), 8

MITRE. *See* Massachusetts Institute of  
Technology Research and Engineering

Muir, Warren R., 4, 15, 16, 18, 19

## N

nanotechnology, 22, 23, 25

National Bureau of Standards. *See* National  
Institute of Standards and Technology

National Institute of Standards and  
Technology (NIST), 1

National Institutes of Health (NIH), 1

National Library of Medicine, 1, 3, 7, 8, 22

Natural Resource Defense Council  
(NRDC), 8

NIH. *See* National Institutes of Health

NRDC. *See* Natural Resource Defense  
Council

## O

Occupational Safety and Health

Administration (OSHA), 7, 8, 15, 22, 26,  
27

OECD. *See* Organisation for Economic Co-  
operation and Development

Office of Management and Budget (OMB),  
13

OMB. *See* Office of Management and  
Budget

Organisation for Economic Co-operation  
and Development (OECD), 3, 4, 7, 12,  
15, 19

Environment Committee, 3, 4

OSD. *See* U.S. Department of Defense:  
Office of the Secretary of Defense

OSHA. *See* Occupational Safety and Health  
Administration

## P

Paris, France, 15

Pollution Prevention Act, 27

## R

RCRA. *See* Resource Conservation and  
Recovery Act

REACH. *See* Registration, Evaluation,  
Authorisation and Restriction of  
Chemicals

Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and  
Restriction of Chemicals (REACH)], 4,  
12, 22, 25

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act  
(RCRA), 21

## S

Secret Internet Protocol Router Network  
(SIPRNet), 16

SIPRNet. *See* Secret Internet Protocol  
Router Network

Superfund, 21

## T

Tittabawassee River, Michigan, 19

Toxic Release Inventory (TRI), 21

Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), 1, 2,  
4, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22,  
23, 24, 25

base data set, 11, 12, 20

confidential business information, 5, 6, 7,  
16, 17, 25

cross-media orientation, 13

existing chemicals, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 14,  
19, 25

new chemicals, 3, 4, 8, 11, 15, 18

risk assessment, 18

Section 13, 2, 3

Section 4, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 21

Section 5, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 21  
Section 8, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 21  
Section 9, 13  
structure activity analysis, 18  
unreasonable risk, 14, 21, 25  
Toxicon, 17  
TRI. *See* Toxic Release Inventory  
TSCA. *See* Toxic Substances Control Act  
TSCA Inventory. *See* TSCA , Section 8

## U

U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1  
U.S. Department of Defense, 16, 26  
Office of the Secretary of Defense  
(OSD), 25  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
(EPA), 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12, 14, 16, 22, 26,  
27, 28  
Office of Air and Radiation, 13, 14, 28  
Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution  
Prevention, 26

Office of Pesticides, 13  
Office of Pesticides and Toxic  
Substances, 26  
Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxic  
Substances, 28  
Office of Solid Waste and Emergency  
Response], 13  
Office of Water, 13, 14, 28  
Toxic Substances Priority Committee, 13  
UNEP. *See* United Nations Environment  
Programme  
Union Carbide Corporation, 10  
United Nations Environment Programme  
(UNEP), 21

## W

Washington, D.C, 1  
WHO. *See* World Health Organization  
World Health Organization (WHO), 11, 12,  
15