

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

JOHN D. BALDESCHWIELER

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

David C. Brock and Arthur Daemmrich

at

Chemical Heritage Foundation
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

on

13 June 2003

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

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JOHN D. BALDESCHWIELER

1933 Born in Elizabeth, New Jersey on 14 November

Education

1956 B.S., chemical engineering, Cornell University

1959 Ph.D., physical chemistry, University of California, Berkeley

Professional Experience

1959-1960 1st Lieutenant, United States Army

Harvard University

1960 Chemistry Lecturer

1960-1962 Chemistry Instructor

1962-1965 Assistant Professor

Stanford University

1965-1967 Associate Professor

1967-1971 Professor

1971-1973 Deputy Director, Office of Science and Technology, Washington DC

1972-1976 Coordinator, Program in Chemical Catalysis, U.S.-U.S.S.R. Commission on Science and Technology

1978-1984 Chairman, Science and Technology Panel, Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China

1981-1993 Chairman, Board of Directors, Vestar Inc.

1988-1995 Director, Cryopharm Inc.

1993-1995 Director, Combion Inc.

1993-1999 Director, NeXstar Pharmaceuticals Inc.

1998-1999 Director, Epic Therapeutics Inc.

1998-2002	Director, Drug Royalty Inc.
1998-2002	Director, GeneSoft Inc.
1999-present	Managing Member, The Athenaeum Fund
2000-present	Director, Pasadena Entrectec
	California Institute of Technology
1973-1978	Chairman, Division of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering
1977-1979	Principal Investigator, California Institute of Technology Institutional Energy Program
1973-1999	Professor
1996-1999	J. Stanley Johnson Professor
1999-present	Professor Emeritus

Honors

1962-1965	Alfred P. Sloan Fellowship
1967	Award in Pure Chemistry, American Chemical Society
1968	Fresenius Award of Phi Lambda Upsilon
1970	National Academy of Sciences
1972	American Academy of Arts and Sciences
1979	American Philosophical Society
1989	Richard C. Tolman Medal, American Chemical Society
1990	William H. Nichols Medal, American Chemical Society
2000	National Medal of Science
2001	Award for Creative Invention, American Chemical Society
2002	Othmer Gold Medal, Chemical Heritage Foundation

ABSTRACT

John D. Baldeschwieler begins the interview with a discussion of his family and childhood interests. He was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, on 14 November 1933. He attended a public school in Cranford, New Jersey, before moving on to college at Cornell University, where he majored in chemical engineering. Baldeschwieler found the chemical engineering program challenging, but despite the 80 percent dropout rate for the program, he graduated at the top of his class. Afterwards, he attended graduate school at the University of California at Berkeley, receiving his PhD in physical chemistry in 1959. Baldeschwieler had been in the ROTC program at Cornell University, but his service in the Army was deferred after he graduated because of an abundance of officers in the Army at that time; however, he was in the Army Reserves while he attended Berkeley. It was while at Berkeley that Baldeschwieler was introduced to infrared spectroscopy. Having served in the military, Baldeschwieler was hired as a chemistry lecturer and instructor at Harvard University. He became an assistant professor in 1962, and remained at the University until 1965, when he moved to Stanford University. Though he had been working in the field of nuclear-magnetic resonance at Cornell, Baldeschwieler decided to change his focus to ion-cyclotron resonance when he moved to Stanford. He became a full professor at Stanford in 1967, and remained with the University until 1971. From 1971 to 1984, Baldeschwieler worked in various important government positions, including the deputy director position for the Office of Science and Technology, and the coordinator position for the Chemical Catalysis Program in the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Commission on Science and Technology. Baldeschwieler began his relationship with Caltech during that time period as well. In 1973, he became chairman of Caltech's Chemistry and Chemical Engineering Division, and a full professor at the Institute. In 1981, Baldeschwieler undertook his first commercial endeavor with the creation of Vestar, Inc. Thus began his work on a string of entrepreneurial ventures, which has included Combion, Inc., Epic Therapeutics, Inc., GeneSoft, Inc., and many others. In 1999 and 2000, Baldeschwieler was responsible in part for the creation of the Athenaeum Fund and Pasadena Entrectec; two organizations established to fund and support young entrepreneurs from Caltech. Baldeschwieler concludes the interview with his thoughts on entrepreneurship and his experiences in the business world.

INTERVIEWERS

David C. Brock is Program Manager for Educational and Historical Services at the Chemical Heritage Foundation in Philadelphia. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the History Department, Program in the History of Science at Princeton University. In 1995, Mr. Brock received his M.A. in the History of Science from Princeton University and in 1992 he earned a M.Sc. in the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge from the University of Edinburgh.

Arthur Daemmrich is a policy analyst at the Chemical Heritage Foundation in Philadelphia. He holds a Ph.D. in Science and Technology Studies from Cornell University and has published on biotechnology policy and politics, the sociology of medicine, and pharmaceutical drug regulation. In his research, he brings long-range perspectives to bear on

the analysis of globalization, risk, health, and environmental policy. Daemmrich has held fellowships from the Social Science Research Council/Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies, and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

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