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FRANK R. MAYO

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

Leon B. Gortler

at

SRI International

on

21 January 1981

THE BECKMAN CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY

Oral History Program

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FRANK REA MAYO

1908 Born in Chicago, Illinois on 23 June
1987 Died at Menlo Park, California on 30 October

Education

1929 B.S., chemistry, University of Chicago
1931 Ph.D., chemistry, University of Chicago
(Mentor: Morris Kharasch)

Professional Experience

1931-1932 Lilly Fellow, University of Chicago (with Morris
Kharasch)
1933-1935 Research Chemist, E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co.
1936-1942 Instructor, University of Chicago
1942-1950 Group Leader, Research Chemist, U.S. Rubber Co.
1950-1956 Research Associate, General Electric Research
Laboratory
1956- Scientific Fellow, SRI International

Awards

1967 Award in Polymer Chemistry, American Chemical
Society

ABSTRACT

In this interview Dr. Frank Mayo first discusses his educational career as an undergraduate and graduate student at the University of Chicago. He then traces his professional career as a research chemist with Du Pont, as an instructor at the University of Chicago where his primary role was the supervision of Morris Kharasch's research group, as a group leader at U.S. Rubber during and after World War II, as a research associate at General Electric, and finally as a fellow at SRI International. He discusses his closest associates, his scientific work, and comments on the rise of free radical chemistry and the value of applying basic research to practical problems.

INTERVIEWER

Leon Gortler holds an A.B. and M.S. (chemistry) from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. in chemistry from Harvard University. He has been on the faculty of Brooklyn College since 1962, where he is currently Professor of Chemistry. This interview was conducted as part of Professor Gortler's long range study of the development of physical organic chemistry in the United States.

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NOTES

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