Melvin D. Hurwitz To Receive The Olney Medal

Melvin D. Hurwitz, a recognized pioneer and authority in the fields of permanent press and thermosetting acrylic polymers, has been named the 1986 recipient of The Olney Medal, AATCC's highest recognition for achievement in textile chemistry.

Hurwitz is a professor and director of the graduate program in the Department of Clothing and Textiles at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He previously worked for 29 years in the research division of Rohm and Haas Co. in research and development of textile chemicals and polymeric systems.

49 Years In Research

After graduating from Harvard University in 1939 with a BA in biochemistry, Hurwitz was awarded an MS in organic chemistry from the University of Chicago in 1942 under Frank R. Mayo. While working for his master's he did research at Billings Hospital, University of Chicago, on human needs for the newly recognized Vitamin B_6. He also designed the first fractional distillation column to be used by the Department of Organic Chemistry. Toward the end of his sojourn at the University of Chicago, Hurwitz accepted a position as inspector of powder and explosives at the War Department's Elwood Ordnance Plant in Kankakee, Ill. After receiving his MS degree, Hurwitz spent the next three years at the U.S. Bureau of Mines, Bruceton, Pa., on NDRC's Division 8 Explosives Research Project. He received a Navy E award for various project developments including armor piercing shells and atom bomb components. He was one of the few who received full Sigma Xi membership based on classified research. At the end of World War II he earned his doctorate in organic chemistry at Cornell University under William T. Miller, and was a teaching assistant during that period of time. His dissertation research dealt with mechanistic problems of organic fluorine chemistry.

Research In Industry

Hurwitz's first and only industrial position was with Rohm and Haas Co. in Philadelphia and Spring House, Pa., from 1948 through 1976. His first assignment was to develop chlorine-resistant nitrogen/formaldehyde "crushproofing" reagents for rayon. It soon became apparent that this chemistry was not only applicable to the permanent press treatment of cotton, but to the thermosetting of polyacrylates. From this work evolved the development of dimethylol ethyleneurea, the standard wrinkle resistant finish of the late fifties, the short-lived triazone/formaldehyde cellulose reactants, thermosetting acrylic latices used as nonwoven binders, acrylic components in latex paints, solution acrylic polymers used as fabric and metal coatings and modified acrylic glazing. From 1956 to 1962 Hurwitz headed the textile chemicals development laboratory. In 1962 he was appointed head of the solution acrylic synthesis laboratory which developed solvent acrylates and copolymers from the exploratory to the plant process stage. From his laboratory came the first successful computer based plant process for polymeric coatings. In 1969 Hurwitz was transferred back into textiles as manager of research and development for textile and leather chemicals.

A New Career: Teaching

After 29 years of productive industrial chemical research and management, Hurwitz decided that he would like to devote the remainder of his professional career to teaching. In January of 1977 he accepted a professorship in the Department of Clothing and Textiles at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro with primary responsibility for the graduate program. He serves as Advisor to the Student Chapter of AATCC. In his almost ten years at UNCG, Hurwitz has chaired the committees and been research advisor to eleven PhD and eight MS students. Of the eleven PhD graduates, seven have become university teachers and are well established in AATCC. The other students are employed in various areas associated with textiles. Three of his students have received scholarship awards from the Northern Piedmont Section of AATCC.

MELVIN D. HURWITZ, research scientist, teacher and consultant, has developed a number of important new processes and chemicals for finishing textiles.

Publications

Hurwitz has published extensively throughout his professional career starting with his MS thesis research. His publications, presentations and many patents cover a broad area of textile related chemistry. One group of his publications deals specifically with the chemistry of cellulose crosslinking and the mechanism of permanent press. He was issued the earliest patent covering the permanent press treatment of cellulosic garments.

Prize Winning Papers

Recent interests have dealt with dyestuff chemistry, a result of being "volunteered" to chair a Northern Piedmont Section Intersectional Technical Competition paper and having a talented and professional dyestuff chemist as a PhD student. All three of the intersectional competitions in which Hurwitz has participated won awards—a second place, second runner-up, and a first.

Consultant

Ecological problems with North Carolina water resources have encouraged research and led to testifying before legislative committees on the subject of phosphates in detergent compositions. Here Hurwitz has learned that the world has multiple truths concerning every issue. As a further contribution to the welfare of North Carolina, he has served as a consultant to the Agricultural Research Services Project on Protective Garments for Pesticide Workers.

Diversity Of Interests

Noteworthy of his professional career has been the diversity of interests. His contri-

The Olney Medal

butions have depended much on his approaching new fields of research with a minimum burden of untested assumptions. He has been able to stimulate those working with him to go beyond their prescribed task and to develop basic principles.

Other Professional Activities

In addition to AATCC, Hurwitz participates in the following professional organizations: American Chemical Society, American Association of University Professors, Association of College Professors of Textiles and Clothing, North Carolina Academy of Science and Sigma Xi.

Personal Interests

Hurwitz's personal life has been as diversified as his professional one. After the war years, he and his wife settled in an "Intentional Community" in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, to live and raise a family of three children. Here he served as chief plumber in the building and maintenance of the community swimming pool, as president of the community, and as president of the Homeowners' Association of Southampton, the town where the community is located. He built much of his own home, re-established his childhood interest in ham radio, and became an amateur horticulturist on two and one-half acres of land. He also collects and restores antique radios.

Hurwitz and his wife, the former Charlotte Krevitsky of Chicago, have three children: Judith Hurwitz Winston, a personnel consultant and psychologist who lives in Toronto, Ontario, Canada; Michael A. Hurwitz, an attorney who makes his home in San Jose, Calif.; and Sara Hurwitz Cohn of Boulder, Col., a school psychologist.

The Olney Medal

Established in 1944 in honor of Dr. Louis Atwell Olney, the founder and first president of AATCC, The Olney Medal is presented in recognition of technical and scientific contributions to the advancement of textile chemistry. The award consists of a gold medal, a scroll and an honorarium. Its presentation each year is a highlight of AATCC conferences. This year's presentation will be made at the conference awards luncheon on Wednesday, October 29. Following the luncheon, Hurwitz will deliver the traditional Olney Medal Address. His topic will be the evolution of permanent press.

Previous Recipients

Hurwitz will be the forty-third recipient of The Olney Medal. The first award was presented to Dr. Olney in 1944. Since then it has been awarded to:

1945—Milton Harris†
Milton Harris Associates
1946—William A. Cady*
U.S. Finishing Co.
1947—Edward A. Schwarz*
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
1948—Harold M. Chase*
Dan River Mills
1949—Charles A. Seibert*
The Du Pont Co.
1950—George L. Royer†
American Cyanamid Co.
1951—Raymond W. Jacoby*
Ciba Co.
1952—Werner von Bergen†
Forstmann Woolen Co.
1953—Roland E. Derby Sr.*
The Derby Co.
1954—William D. Appel*
National Bureau of Standards
1955—Miles A. Dahlen*
The Du Pont Co.
1956—Walter J. Hamburger*
Fabric Research Laboratories
1957—P. J. Wood*
Royce Chemical Co.
1958—Henry E. Millson†
American Cyanamid Co.
1959—Emery I. Valko*
Lowell Technological Institute
1960—Arnold M. Sookne†
Harris Research Laboratories
1961—Fred Fortess
Celanese Corporation of America
1962—Charles F. Goldthwait*
North Carolina State University
1963—Guiliana C. Tesoro
J. P. Stevens & Co.
1964—Richard O. Steele
Rohm and Haas Co.
1965—Herman F. Mark†
Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn
1966—Wilson A. Reeves†
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1967—Edwin I. Stearns†
American Cyanamid Co.
1968—Harold P. Lundgren†
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1969—D. Donald Gagliardi*
Gagliardi Research Corp.
1970—Paul L. Meunier†
The Du Pont Co.
1971—Ernest R. Kaswell†
Fabric Research Laboratories
1972—Victor S. Salvin†
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

continued page 54