
Profile

RON STILLMAN



Six years of retirement haven't changed former AOCS President Ron Stillman much.

He and his wife, Margaret, live in the same brick residence in Cincinnati's College Hill neighborhood that they moved into during 1941 when he worked for Procter & Gamble. He still enjoys fishing trips, golf, cards and his family—his four children, now grown, have families of their own totaling nine grandchildren. Ron continues as an active member of the AOCS Examination Board. He still takes pride in careful attention to records and details—needed in keeping track of all those birthdays and special occasions involving nine grandkids.

Fishing may be an inherited trait in the Stillman family. Son Ron is an avid fisherman and one 5-year-old grandchild in Atlanta, GA, greets each visit by Grandpa with the question, "Grandpa, are you going to take me fishing?"

Stillman began fishing during his youth near Brookfield, NY, (15 miles from Utica) where he was born Jan. 9, 1908. The best catch in the New York streams was trout.

His father died in 1918 of flu, likely the same strain responsible for the recent Swine Flu activities.

Stillman describes himself as the runt of his family—the youngest of four brothers with his three older siblings all topping 6 feet while he grew to be 5-foot-6. His son, Ron, is 6-foot-2.

After finishing his school at age 16, Stillman worked in a silk mill in Sherburne, NY, for a year before enrolling at Marietta College in Ohio. He had obtained a scholarship through the recommendation of the local Congregational Church.

During his college years, there was no time for fishing. As one of two assistants in the chemistry department, Stillman did commercial analytical work, including the preparation of standard solutions for the Marietta waterworks.

As graduation time neared, Stillman and the other chem assistant began to look for jobs. At one point, they sat down with a publication listing chemical firms. Stillman wrote to firms on even-numbered pages; his lab-mate wrote to those on odd-numbered pages. Procter & Gamble was on an even-numbered page.

P&G offered the 1929 graduate \$1,800 a year to work in its Cincinnati headquarters. The federal government offered \$2,000, but Stillman "liked what I saw" during a visit to P&G facilities. On July 1, 1929, he began in P&G's Development Department as part of a chemical engineering group.

Two years later, he shifted to the analytical lab and it was while working in that lab that he joined AOCS in 1934. That was after the AOCS journal, *Oil and Soap* had published an article by Stillman and W.S. Martin on "Oil and Fat Analyses by the Thiocyanogen Method" in February 1933. It was the first of ten articles Stillman would help write for AOCS publications, among more than a dozen articles and book chapters published through 1963. AOCS was one of three technical organizations that captured Stillman's interest during his career—the other two were the

American Chemical Society and the Engineering Society of Cincinnati.

During his early years at P&G he lived in Winton Place and played poker ("I still love to play cards," he says) with a group that included a garage operator, Frank Hebert, and several new P&G chemists. They were also fishing enthusiasts.

"We fished together for 25 years," Stillman recalls, mostly on weekend trips to Herrington Lake, Kentucky, at that time several hours' drive south of Cincinnati, and in Prime Bass Lake.

At P&G, Stillman was working on the solid phases of soap—such things as color and why soap cracked when drying out on a washstand, and a soap's latherability. He served on AOCS committees concerned with soaps.

"The things I was working on at P&G were things the Society was interested in," he says. "It was important to P&G for me to know people. I said I never went to a meeting to hear papers, I wanted to work on committees to meet people and to talk with them. That's when you learn things."

In 1936, Stillman attended a dividend party where he met Margaret Sarbeck of P&G's auditing division. He didn't see her again until the following year's dividend party at Coney Island, a Cincinnati amusement park. That night they went to a dance with music by Guy Lombardo. "After that," Stillman says, "things went pretty fast." They were married May 26, 1937.

In 1945, Stillman began work in P&G's standards department. (About the same time he became active in analytical committees in AOCS.)

"I used to audit all the plants we had once a year," Stillman says. "I was out of town about one week a month for 15 years." He was writing chemical standards for P&G plants and then following up to insure that the standards were adhered to. His trips would take him throughout the United States, Canada, Cuba, Mexico, South America and, in 1960, for a full month to the Philippines.

Stillman became attuned to the need for careful record keeping. He admits to being somewhat of a packrat—"I still have copies of those letters I sent out to different companies when I was finishing college"—and found it was a useful trait for a chemist. His final article for the AOCS Journal, in 1959, was entitled, "Technical Accuracy in the Control Laboratory."

About 1945, Stillman found a new avocation to go with golf and fishing and cards. He accepted a post as neighborhood commissioner for a local Boy Scout troop—even before his son was old enough for Cub Scouts. He became chairman of the Cub Scout committee when young Ron was old enough to enroll and eventually served three years as district commissioner for his Cincinnati area.

Now he occasionally is greeted by full-grown men who speedily recognize their former Scout leader, but Stillman finds he cannot quickly match the mature man with the adolescent youth of 20 to 30 years ago.

It was in the 1940s that Stillman began fishing trips into

Canada's lake country, trips that he still enjoys. There's a difference now. Many years ago the only way to reach an isolated area was to portage in. Now pontoon-equipped small aircraft haul fishermen in and out of campsites beside tree-lined lakes.

Stillman was first elected to the AOCS governing board in 1957, becoming vice president in 1963 and serving as the society's 55th president during 1964. He cites two areas of major interest while he was president—the formation of an executive committee to handle immediate society problems arising between governing board sessions and the establishment of a continuous AOCS Presidential record to be passed on from one president to the next. He also mentions with pride having been the first AOCS representative to LIFE—the League for International Food Education.

For a few years after his 1971 retirement, Stillman worked part-time preparing tax returns. But now life revolves largely around golf—"I shoot around 90, a low this past season of 85 and a high of about 105"—on seven public-owned courses in and around Cincinnati; poker and bridge parties, often with other former P&G employees; once-a-month luncheons that Stillman helped organize for P&G retirees at the Flaming Pit Restaurant near Cincinnati's Tri-County Shopping Center; annual visits to Florida for fishing and golfing (Margaret Stillman now also plays), and fishing trips to just about anywhere a fishing buddy wants to go.

What happens to all that fish?

"We've got some in the freezer right now," Stillman said this past winter.

"But I don't like fish, so I bring home very little. The other guys will want to clean fish of an evening for breakfast the next morning and I'll tell them, 'You go ahead. I'll eat pancakes.'"

Cosmetic, Toiletries Outlook

Retail sales of cosmetics and toiletries should climb to \$10.9 billion by 1981 after estimated 1976 sales of \$7.2 billion according to an Arthur D. Little Inc. study of the industry.

Cosmetics, which includes make-up, women's fragrances, skin treatment products, and hand preparations, will increase approximately 10.6 percent to lead the rise, the firm said. Sales to working women will increase, the study said, as the industry continues a shift from products that cover up problems to products that improve skin appearance.

Toiletries, including hair preparations, oral products, men's toiletries, external personal deodorants, toilet soaps, and miscellaneous products, will grow at a 7.7 percent rate, below the industry-wide average of 8.6 percent, Little says.

The increasing number of working women has led to declines in door-to-door sales and increasing reliance on prime-time television advertising to reach these potential customers.

Increased costs to develop new products may strain research and development budgets, according to Anne Neilson, co-director of the study. "R&D budgets are characteristically low to begin with and are already taxed by compliance with safety control legislation," she said.

To reverse the trend toward regulatory matters consuming an even greater portion of research funds, she predicts the industry will cooperate to develop and standardize test procedures.

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