
Profile

MANNY EIJADI



A funny thing happened to Manny Eijadi on his way to Hollywood.

He became an oil chemist instead.

Actually, it was a string of circumstances that brought a halt to the Iranian native's promising theatrical career back in the 1940s. But three decades later he looks back without regrets, and only occasional musings of "What if . . ."

Manny may be best known to many AOCS members in his role as PVO International's host at national meetings. He's PVO's corporate vice president of international development. To Northeast Section members, he's been a stalwart member whose dedication and work earned him the section's 1977 Achievement Award. Last year he also served as chairman of the "Food and Cosmetic Additive" symposium, the section's first two-day symposium. Actually, he's likely to turn up anywhere there's an AOCS meeting, as he did last fall in suburban Chicago to attend a North Central Section meeting while traveling through the Midwest.

Manny's involvement in theater as well as his eventual career in chemistry have their origins in Iran. His father and uncle, Manny explains, opened the first gasoline service station in Iran during the 1920s. From them came an interest in things mechanical and mathematical. His father's side of the family also included many musicians. From them came an interest in the arts.

Manny participated in school dramatics from the time he was 10 years old, which led to invitations to appear on Iran national radio and theater. By age 20, he was an established theatrical and radio performer. He received degrees in business and in drama in Iran, but wanted to come to the United States.

He told his father he was coming to the U.S. to pursue a degree in engineering and obtained a student visa. He really was more interested in theater when he arrived in the United States in 1947.

He appeared in such stage plays as "Three Men on a Horse" and "The Heiress," a controversial drama of its day. The young actor-student received good reviews, and also was earning recognition for his talents as a potential director.

During those late 1940s, he also became involved in network television drama before the era of video tape, when they were telecast live. Actors were paid \$5 an hour for rehearsal time in nonspeaking roles, \$10 an hour for speaking roles, plus \$150 and \$250, respectively, for the actual telecast. He worked with Ralph Bellamy in the CBS program "Man Against Crime" and also on "Follow That Man."

Manny was juggling his academic schedule to match his work schedule so that he could maintain his visa. He had enrolled at Long Island University as an electrical engineering student, but wound up with a degree in physics and a degree in chemistry.

Eventually he met and wed an American girl. By the 1950s, at the time he received an invitation to come to Hollywood, their first child was due to be born. His wife wanted him to stay with her on the East Coast, get out of show business and into a more settled profession. Manny

agreed. A daughter, Linda, was their first child; son David, born a few years later, is an architectural engineer.

In 1953, backed by his chemistry degree, he became chief chemist in Drew Chemical's catalyst division, thus sidling into the world of fats and oils chemistry. Four months later he became head of research and development and in 1957 became production manager. He also joined AOCS at this time.

During 1960 he began his active involvement in AOCS and in sales. Manny attended his first AOCS national meeting that year with his boss. "The reception I received was so nice that I felt as though I had found a new family," Manny recalls. His boss, noting his production manager's rapport with other registrants, told him, "You get along very well with people; maybe you should be in sales." Later that year Manny became general manager of the catalytic chemical division and chemical specialties international sales.

Manny travels around the globe as a sales executive, once guesstimating he has logged three million miles — equivalent to 120 trips around the Earth. He says he "gets along" in seven or eight languages, a useful facility. "You know, science is an international language," he says. "Words are exchanged from one language to another, so you just keep listening until you begin to pick up a few words, and then you begin to understand." The key is discerning a language's cadence and differentiating between words, he says.

As he travels around the world, Manny frequently is asked to speak at universities. "The Third World is advancing so rapidly, generating a demand for technology," he explains. "They're thirsting for knowledge (about fats and oils chemistry) in Malaysia, India, Israel, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and so on. I spoke with a 106-degree fever in Lahore for two hours and then they asked questions for another two hours. We could form an AOCS chapter right now in Iran."

PVO acquired the catalyst operations of Drew Chemical in 1971, and Manny joined his present firm as vice president of chemical specialties. He has held his present post since 1976.

He occasionally visits and parties with his show business contacts. "I've maintained the friendships, and it is fun to become involved again for an evening out; but it's a different world, they have a different set of values," Manny says. Success or failure is so transitory in show business, he explains, that emotions ride roller coasters all the time.

A New Jersey resident, he enjoys attending Broadway drama, but while others are following the story line, Manny is watching the acting techniques. "Good actors and actresses can converse with each other on stage entirely apart from the play," he says. "I'll go see one play as many as ten times.

"Acting used to be an art of creation, a young actor would create an older character. Now acting is largely casting a person in a role that fits, it's not an act of creation any more; it's superficial."

Besides drama, he enjoys tennis and dancing as well as an occasional game of cards. "Too many people play cards expecting to win; I don't," he says. "I play to have a good time and don't expect to win, so I'm always relaxed."

At times, Manny says, he's had job opportunities that would have taken him away from AOCS activities. "I didn't want to become separated from the people I know; I couldn't give up friends I've known for a quarter of a century," he says. "People are the most important part of life.

"This is a society not only of experts in their fields, but also a society of friends. There is a spirit seldom found."

The Northeast section's officers and board members meet each June to discuss when and where to hold meetings during the next fall and winter, what topics should be discussed, who should organize each meeting, etc. But before they talk, they eat. The meeting is always held at Manny's home, and the food is prepared by his mother — a true Iranian feast that gives Manny a chance to play one of his favorite roles — host to his friends in AOCS. ●

AOCS Executive Committee meets

The AOCS Executive Committee held its regular semi-annual meeting during early August at AOCS Headquarters in Champaign to discuss and act on several business matters.

The committee officially approved appointment of George Cavanagh as general chairman for the 1979 meeting in San Francisco to replace Richard Purdy, who has been promoted by his firm and transferred to the Philippines. Arnold Gavin was officially appointed chairman for the 1983 meeting in Chicago.

AOCS also will cosponsor, without financial obligation, the International Congress on Oilseeds and Oils being held in New Delhi during February 1979 under leadership of the Oil Technologists' Association of India. The North Central Section of AOCS was given permission to cosponsor an all-day symposium in 1979 with the Chicago area chapter of the American Association of Cereal Chemists.

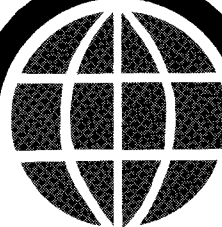
The group approved continuation of the AOCS Foundation's proposal to develop a compilation of fats and oils methods worldwide. A consultant will now prepare a rough working script for a proposed audio/visual presentation on the need for such a compilation. The eventual goal is to ask major firms to provide funds to launch the project.

The Executive Committee also voted to express to the Governing Board its preferences that the activities normally held during the Inaugural Luncheon at national meetings be transferred to other times during the meeting. The luncheon is usually held at noon of the closing day of the meeting, adding about two hours to the meeting time, the committee said. Many persons skip the luncheon to begin traveling home. A final decision is up to the Governing Board.

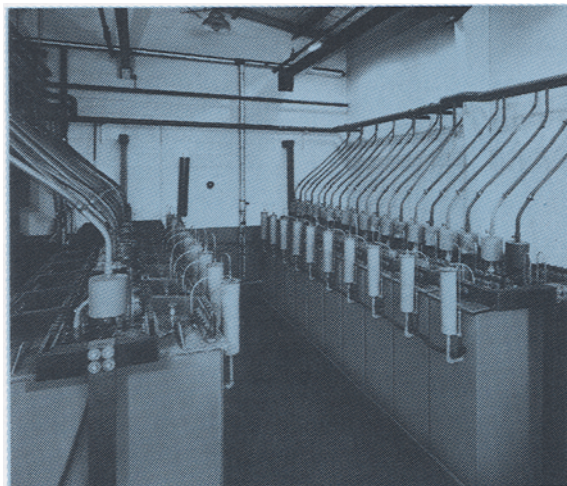
The committee also discussed the merits of having a Governing Board subcommittee responsible for long range planning. The idea will be presented to the Governing Board during its meeting this fall.

Other discussions centered around financial planning, including expenditures for new typographic composing equipment to replace present equipment; suggestions for a new retirement plan for staff members, triggered by new federal regulations covering retirement funds; and the long term financial outlook of AOCS.

During the meeting, various proposals for future short courses were discussed. A fatty acids short course will be held during 1979. A proposal was discussed to hold two short courses — on edible fats and oils and on pollution control problems — immediately before the 1980 meeting in New York. An extensive symposium on energy conservation was suggested for the 1981 meeting in New Orleans, which might attract attendance by persons attending the 1981 International Association of Seed Crushers meeting, to be held in San Francisco one week before the AOCS meeting. ●



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