
People



Profile: Hans Kaunitz

A few years after the turn of the century, when Hans Kaunitz was born in Vienna, that city was renowned as a center for the arts and science, as a city of music, and as *the* place to study medicine.

Even after the disastrous consequences of World War I, some of the atmosphere of pre-war Vienna prevailed when Hans Kaunitz, then in his 20s, began attending medical school in his native city. When he would leave Vienna in 1938, he would take with him memories of "one of the leading cultural centers of the earth," an appreciation for fine opera, and the basis for a medical research career that eventually would focus on fats and oils, earning him the 1981 Alton E. Bailey Award from the North Central Section of the AOCS.

Kaunitz' entry into medicine was virtually predestined. His grandfather and two uncles were physicians in Vienna and "when I was born, my parents had already decided I would go into medicine," Kaunitz says. He was the eldest of five children, but the only one to enter medicine. In preparation for medical school, Kaunitz attended one of Vienna's "humanistic gymnasium" schools from age 11 to 19, studying Latin for eight years and Greek for six years. "I can still cite some of Homer and other classical authors in the original languages," he says. His two primary languages are German and English, with English being "my best scientific language," Kaunitz says. "Even though I still have such a heavy accent, if I am giving a paper in German, I will write it first in English and then translate it."

Being admitted to medical school then was not as difficult as it is today, Kaunitz says, but the course of study was just as intensive. The Vienna Medical School was still under the influence of Theodor Billroth, a famed surgeon

who had died a few years before. Among Kaunitz' teachers were Otto von Fuerth, a well-known biochemist; Arnold Durig, Julius Wagner van Jauregg (the 1927 Nobel Medalist in medicine), Hans Eppinger (in whose department Kaunitz worked, and the well-known psychologist Alfred Adler. Adler's daughter is still Kaunitz' good friend in New York.

Music was pervasive in Vienna, and Kaunitz describes the 20s as "the Golden Age of opera" for the city. As with students everywhere, the opera-loving youth of Vienna could not afford the high-priced seats, and so would buy standees' tickets. "In order even to get a standee's place, you had to get in line the night before," Kaunitz says. "Of course, you could only do this on a weekend; during the week there was just too much studying. You know, I think that standees everywhere believe that only they understand opera. We were the same." Now he attends opera at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts which he says is "one of the greatest institutions of the arts I have seen in my life."

Kaunitz' uncles encouraged him to enter medical research, but while their interest was pathology, young Kaunitz steered toward the relatively new field of biochemistry. The microscope had changed the study of biology during the 19th century, he says, and the importance of chemistry in biology was emerging in the early 20th century.

In 1935, Kaunitz became head of the clinical laboratory at the University hospital. The dean of the College of Medicine in Manila, the Philippines, was among the many visitors from abroad about that time. He asked Kaunitz to establish a clinical laboratory in Manila, but Kaunitz initially said no. By 1938, however, Hitler's speeches and actions led Kaunitz to inquire whether the offer was still available. It was, and he accepted.

Some years previously, Kaunitz had received correspondence from a Dr. Julius Kaunitz of the United States. Julius had noticed the family name in scientific literature and had written to determine if Julius and Hans were relatives. They probably weren't, but Hans decided to travel to the Philippines via the United States partially so he could visit Julius. The United States, Hans Kaunitz decided, was a marvelous, friendly nation.

The decline in cellulose consumption, combined with increased fat consumption, is particularly bothersome to Kaunitz.

In 1940, the clinical laboratory in Manila was firmly established and war was threatening in the Far East. Kaunitz left the Philippines to join the medical school at Columbia University in New York, where he has been a faculty member for the past four decades. During 1942, at a party to which he was invited by Julius Kaunitz, Hans

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Kaunitz met Esther Beckwith. They were married in 1943. Esther was a psychiatric social worker, since retired, who had done her undergraduate work at Smith College and her graduate work at Columbia.

While his early work concerned nutrition, especially the effects of vegetables and salt, during the 1950s Kaunitz became interested in the biological effects of oxidized fats. During a Gordon Research Conference he met Vig Babayan. The two began cooperating in work on medium chain triglycerides. Kaunitz lists Babayan and Peter Noznick, who

attendees at AOCS meetings. He has helped organize and has spoken at many AOCS meetings. Although he is a member of several scientific societies in the U.S. and abroad (he presents invited lectures overseas quite often), he says he likes the atmosphere at AOCS meetings and has developed many friends among members. He has done extensive work with researchers at the USDA Eastern Regional Research Center, who introduced him to AOCS (he joined in 1958). Kaunitz received the Northeast Section's Achievement Award in 1971, the Presidential Merit Medal from the Government of the Philippines in 1974 (his work on medium-chain triglycerides was of major interest to the coconut-producing nation), and the Great Medal of Honor of the Republic of Austria in 1974.

Like many researchers in fats and oils, Kaunitz believes much has yet to be learned as to the role of fats in nutrition, health and disease. He also shares a belief that Americans consume too much fat. The decline in cellulose consumption, combined with increased fat consumption, is particularly bothersome to Kaunitz (as it is to many researchers).

For relaxation, he still enjoys the opera and readings in history. Kaunitz and his wife also have a home about 60 miles north of New York City where they can do some gardening each year. Finally, although he was a soccer player during his youth, he admits being Americanized enough that "I like to look at baseball."

And that's something they didn't have in Vienna during the 1920s. Or, if they did, no one wrote an opera about it. □

"I like to look at baseball."

nominated him for the Bailey Award, as among the most delightful persons he has met in the United States. Another would be Ruth Johnson, who worked with Kaunitz for several decades until her death a few years ago. She was coauthor of many publications and a monograph with Kaunitz.

Today, at age 75, Kaunitz has slowed down somewhat. While he used to work at least 12 hours a day, he now works approximately 9 hours a day. He sees patients from three to four hours each day; other working hours are for research and writing.

His work on arteriosclerosis is well-known to regular

Appointments

Norman L. Betz is new president of the American Association of Cereal Chemists; Dr. Betz, of Ralston Purina in St. Louis, is former executive editor of *Cereal Science Today/Cereal Foods World*. Other newly elected AACC officers include William C. Mailhot of General Mills as a director and Bert D'Appolonia, of North Dakota State University, as secretary. . . . Jerry M. Love, chairman of AOCS' Northern California Section, has been named plant manager for Agricom's Edible Oil Refinery in Berkeley, California. . . . William B. Stokeley III has been named chairman of the board and chief executive officer at Stokeley-Van Camp Inc.; Alfred J. Stokeley, who previously held those positions, becomes chairman of the board's finance committee; Leonard J. Delehanty was elected president; Robert L. Rice, senior vice-president, will head the firm's new Grocery Products Group. . . . Thomas J. Filipi has been appointed to the position of senior product manager for liquid chromatography at Whatman Chemical Separation Inc., with responsibility for all product management functions for the complete line of Whatman high performance chromatography media, analytical and preparative LC columns. . . . Frank A. Lee has been elected chairman of the board by the directors of Foster Wheeler Corp., who also appointed Louis E. Azzato president and chief executive officer of the corporation. . . . Joel E. Rogelberg is the new West Coast area manager for Glyco Inc. and will

Mustakas retires

Gus Mustakas has retired as a supervisory research group leader at the USDA's Northern Regional Research Center after more than 30 years at the Peoria, Illinois, facility. A chemical engineer, his work on fundamental and applied research has been concentrated on soybeans. He has helped develop industrial- and village-scale processes for soybeans. Mustakas says he plans "to take advantage of some retirement and simultaneously try a little consulting in the soybean processing field." Mustakas will continue to make his home in Peoria. He originally joined AOCS in 1957. □

be in charge of promotion and sales of Glyco products. . . . Durkee Industrial Foods Group/SCM Corp. has announced the appointment of Christine L. Ford to the position of territorial sales representative-Midwest region.

Alembic appoints directors

Noel Thornton and Eric Chicot have been appointed joint managing directors of Alembic Products Ltd. of Manchester, England, a trading company handling specialty oils and fats, fatty acids, fatty alcohols, vitamins and related products. Thornton has been with the firm since 1961 as a trader; Chicot is a technical and production specialist in oleochemicals. □



Holman

Ralph Holman elected to NAS

Former AOCS President Ralph Holman has been elected to membership in the prestigious National Academy of Science. Dr. Holman is director of The Hormel Institute, University of Minnesota, in Austin, Minnesota.

Sixty persons are selected annually from the field of biological, physical and social sciences for NAS membership. Dr. Holman's selection from the biological area recognizes his career work on the nutritional role of fats and fatty acids. There is a total of 1,300 NAS members.

Election to NAS is one of the highest honors available to scientists in the United States. Dr. Holman previously has received the AOCS Award in Lipid Chemistry and the Alton E. Bailey Award from AOCS' North Central Section. □

C.L. Kingsbaker now consultant

C. Louis Kingsbaker has established a consulting company, C.L. Kingsbaker Inc., to work in the areas of process design, plant safety analysis, energy audits, trouble shooting and general improvement of plant performance and efficiency. The firm is located at 7245 Northgreen Dr. N.E., Atlanta, GA 30328 (404-396-4887). Kingsbaker, an active member of the AOCS since 1963, is AOCS' representative on the National Fire Protection Association committee on safety in solvent extraction plants. □

Deaths

Eric R. Wallsgrove

AOCS has been informed of the Feb. 10, 1981, death of Eric R. Wallsgrove, technical director at Croda International Ltd. in Oldbury, Warley, England. He was a 1944 graduate of Oxford and had joined AOCS during 1980.

Donald H. Saunders

AOCS has been informed of the May 19, 1981, death of Donald H. Saunders, a former research chemist at the USDA Eastern Regional Research Center. Dr. Saunders was 70. He had retired from the ERRC in 1975. Dr. Saunders received his doctorate from Yale University in 1940; he joined the ERRC staff in 1942 and became a member of the AOCS in the mid-1950s.

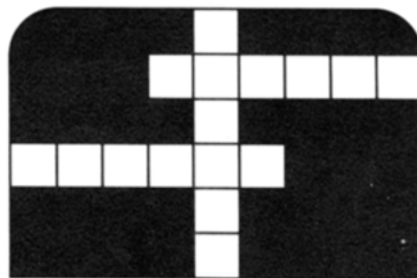
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