

# People

## Profile: Everett H. Pryde



Outwardly, Everett H. Pryde is quiet and unassuming. But don't let that mislead you about his accomplishments. He is a talented scientist recognized throughout the world and in USDA as an expert on nonfood use of vegetable oils.

In a way, Pryde's surname seems contradictory to his demeanor. While he certainly takes pride in his work as research leader for exploratory organic research in the oilseed crops laboratory at USDA's Northern Regional Research Center in Peoria, Illinois, he is not boastful.

Pryde's family name initially was "Pride." "The original family settled around Boston," he explains, but a family difference over politics during Revolutionary War days resulted in the Tories of the clan moving to Nova Scotia where they changed the "i" in their surname to "y." Ev's grandfather, born in Nova Scotia, brought one Pryde branch of the family back to the U.S. A watchmaker, he moved to Massachusetts to work for Waltham Watch. He later moved to Columbus, Ohio, and finally to Illinois, where he worked at the Elgin Watch factory. Ev's father was born in Elgin and Ev, although born in Chicago, also grew up in Elgin.

Like many future chemists, Ev had a chemistry set as a youngster. "I never was satisfied with the magic tricks that you could do to turn a glass of water into wine, or vice versa," he says. Instead, he was more interested in the principles behind what happened.

His father, an employee of the Chicago and Alton Railroad, had hoped that his son someday would earn a Ph.D., but died in 1929 when Ev was 11.

An aunt who was married to a graduate of Amherst College in Massachusetts talked Ev into attending Amherst, where he earned his bachelor of arts in chemistry in 1939. He then went to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor for two years, to study for a master's in chemistry.

By the time he completed his master's, graduate school funds had run out. Pryde, an only child, also had his mother to support. So he took a job with Casein Company of America, a division of the Borden Company. There he worked in the research laboratory to develop new adhesives. He obtained several patents for his work there.

Ev made a job change in 1943 to Koppers Company where he worked at its Kobuta, Pennsylvania, plant which manufactured butadiene and styrene, components used during World War II to make synthetic rubber. Ev had charge

of the center control laboratory and carried out specification tests. "I was sort of proud that the products could only leave over my signature," he recalls. At the end of the war, the Kobuta plant was to be phased out because the petrochemical industry was able to make a less costly synthetic rubber.

Ev considered going back to school to get a doctorate in chemistry. The decision to do so was clinched when his father's former boss, Mr. Beard, president of the Chicago and Alton Railroad, left a bequest to Ev. In addition, Ev received an assistantship at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, which he suspects a family friend helped arrange. Studying under Professor McElvain, he earned his Ph.D. in organic chemistry in 1948.

He then began working in the Electrochemicals Department of E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Co., Inc., in Niagara Falls, New York, where he was a research chemist for nine years.

In 1957, Ev turned down a company transfer to Memphis, Tennessee. "I long ago had decided I didn't want to move to the South because of climatic conditions there," he says. "And, once you refuse a move, you might as well look for another job." That is what he did. A friend, Bill Miller, had gone to work at the Northern Regional Research Center 10 months earlier. That's where Ev, too, found a position. At the time, John Cowan was head of the center's Oilseed Crop lab.

Pryde was hired as a supervisory chemist. In 1961, he was promoted to investigation head (research leader). In 1978 and 1979, he served as the oilseed crop research coordinator.

Although he attended his first AOCS meeting to present a paper on sodium reduction in menhaden while with du Pont, Ev did not become an AOCS member until 1958, when he was working in Peoria. It was also in Peoria that he met his future wife, Phyllis, a Bradley University graduate in interior design.

"I'm very interested in music and have played the cello since 1934," says Ev. "I was fortunate to have an exceptional teacher in Elgin, Mrs. Berta Hecker Browning, and another in Buffalo, Rudolph Doblin. I played with chamber groups in Buffalo, and when I moved to Illinois, I started playing with the Peoria Symphony. Another cellist, Ruth Johnson, introduced me to my future wife at a symphony

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ball." Or rather, he clarifies, Ruth introduced Ev and Phyllis and they attended the ball together. It was a successful date. They were married on Valentine's Day, 1959.

Ev's research at USDA's Northern lab has been wholly with nonfood uses of vegetable oils. Currently, he directs three chemists in organic research on soybeans, linseed and other oilseed crops of the region. Within the Agricultural Research Service, he serves as a consultant for industrial and fuel uses of oilseed products.

A prime interest for the past three years has been research on vegetable oils as fuels. Currently, efforts on this topic at the Northern lab include Art Schwab's work on microemulsions and Bernard Freedman's work on transesterification of the oils. Pryde says much research has been conducted cooperatively with the University of Illinois and North Dakota State.

"Unfortunately, some funds that have been available for several years have dried up so we haven't been able to complete some of the engine testing, particularly with microemulsions," he says. "I don't know where the money will come from."

While the dominant focus at the Northern lab and USDA recently has been food aspects of agricultural crops, Pryde sees a growing need for nonedible uses. "Vegetable oils in general need more markets to help sustain the price and return to producers and processors," he says.

Citing the relatively low price of soybean oil, he says, "If we could find a new market for 500 million pounds a year, it would help a lot. That's why we're interested in the use of vegetable oils as carriers for agricultural chemicals and

the diesel applications, for example."

And that, says Pryde, who turned 65 in February 1983, is why he has no plans to retire.

Much of his time is devoted to writing. He has written several review articles for industrial, governmental, academic and lay audiences on nonfood uses of fats and oils. "If petroleum products increase in price — and I believe they will as the current low prices do not reflect long-term trends — we have to look where we're going to find chemical intermediates that formerly were petrochemically based," he points out.

Ev has authored or coauthored more than 125 papers and patents and has served as editor for three AOCS monographs: "Fatty Acids," "Handbook of Soy Oil Processing and Utilization," and "New Sources of Fats and Oils." He also was on the editorial advisory board for the CRC "Handbook of Processing and Utilization in Agriculture." He received the 1983 American Soybean Association utilization research award during August.

Although Ev is a member of the American Chemical Society, the American Society of Agricultural Engineers and the Institute of Food Technologists, he considers AOCS his "home base." In addition to the monograph work, he has organized sessions for AOCS, including a symposium on vegetable oils as pesticide carriers at the Chicago 1983 meeting. He and Frank Gunstone of Scotland put together a session on "New Chemistry of Fatty Acids" for the 1983 World Conference on Oleochemicals and Pryde is looking forward to organizing a session for the 1984 annual meeting in Dallas.



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His wife, Phyllis, a private interior design consultant, works part-time for a furniture company in Peoria. They have two daughters, Laurie and Pamela (better known as "Penny"). Laurie, a 1982 graduate of William Woods College in Fulton, Missouri, lives in St. Louis where she is assistant manager for a shop. Penny, age 20, with red hair like her dad's, attends a special Peoria school for young people with Down's Syndrome where she is learning skills to be more independent.

Although Pryde has suffered with a skin cancer for eight years, he has not let it interfere with his busy schedule of writing and lecturing. He has learned to administer treatments himself following doctors' instructions.

Pryde's reddish hair and light complexion (inherited from Norwegian ancestry on his mother's side) and calm deportment belie his years. The calmness he credits, in part, to his cello playing. "Music is the only interest I find time for and would really miss if I had to give it up," he explains. The only reason he temporarily gave up the Peoria Symphony in the past was to work on monographs for AOCS and CRC Press.

"Music and my work both call for intense concentration, but that required for music is completely different from the type at work," he says.

"The contrast is relaxing."

### Obituaries

#### Benjamin R. Harris

Benjamin R. Harris, a member of the Society for nearly 49 years, died July 12, 1983. Mr. Harris was a graduate of

the City College of New York and the University of Illinois.

He joined AOCS in September 1934 while treasurer of The Emulsol Corporation of Chicago, a firm he helped found and which he later served as president. He was a founder and partner in the consulting firm of Epstein Reynolds and Harris of Chicago.

Mr. Harris was the author of more than 100 domestic and foreign patents relating to production of food and detergents. He was a member of several other scientific organizations, including the American Chemical Society, Institute of Food Technology and Sigma Xi. Mr. Harris resided in Glencoe, Illinois.

#### Desmond P. Kavanagh

AOCS has been informed of the death of Desmond P. Kavanagh, a vegetable oil industry consultant and a member of AOCS. Mr. Kavanagh was a graduate of Canisus College and the University of Chicago. During a career spanning more than three decades, Mr. Kavanagh had worked for Armour and Co., Swift & Co., Drew Chemical, PVO, Theobald Industries and, for a brief while, been president and senior partner in a brokerage house dealing in finished oils. He had moved earlier this year from St. Louis, Missouri, to Amherst, New York.

#### Richard J. Sweeney

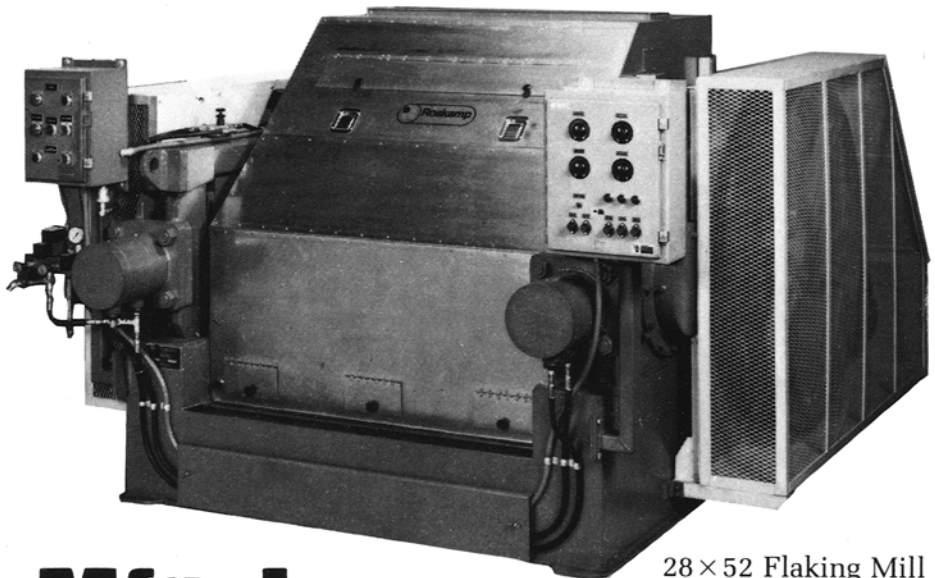
AOCS has been informed of the death of Richard J. Sweeney of Monarch Fine Foods Co. Ltd. in Rexdale, Ontario, Canada. Mr. Sweeney had been a member since 1968. He was a 1952 graduate of Sir George William University in Canada.

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