Ralph Potts Named Honorary Member in AOCS

R. H. Potts, internationally known chemical engineer who pioneered the development of the fats and oils industry during his career with Armour Industrial Chemical Company, was elected to honorary membership in the American Oil Chemists' Society at the 61st Annual Meeting in New Orleans, La.

Mr. Potts was honored for his outstanding achievements in the chemistry and technology of fats and oils. Honorary members are elected for life, enjoy all rights and privileges of membership and are exempt from dues.

A Bachelor of Science graduate of Lehigh University, Mr. Potts joined Armour in 1922. His work in the glycerine and soap manufacturing operations led him to research work on fatty acid distillation and production of chemical derivatives of fatty acids. In 1934 Mr. Potts headed a process and product development group at the Armour Auxiliaries. Three years later he designed and put into operation two pilot plants, one for continuous hydrogenation and deodorization of tallow and shortening oils, and the other for the development of processes to manufacture chemical derivatives from fats and oils.

Mr. Potts designed and built the first commercial unit for production of nitriles and amines, thus laying the groundwork for the entire chemicals from fats industry. During this period, Mr. Potts was instrumental in merging Armour's fatty acid operations and the fat chemical development group to form the Armour Chemical Division, a forerunner of Armour Industrial Chemical Company. In addition to the Armour chemical plant at McCook, Ill., Mr. Potts engineered the Armour-Hess Chemicals Ltd. plant at Leeds, England, and the Sandar Fabrikker plant at Sandefjord, Norway.

Mr. Potts' patents range from refining of glycerine to manufacture of nitriles, fractionation of mixed fatty acids, hydrogenation of edible oils and fractionation of talloil.

Mr. Potts has been a member of AOCS since 1938. During that time he has served the Society as a member of the Advertising Committee in 1948-50; the International Relations Committee in 1960; and the National Program and Planning Committee in 1966-1968. In 1960, Mr. Potts was awarded the Alton E. Bailey medal by the North Central Section, AOCS, for his work in the field of fats and oils technology.

Mr. Potts retired from Armour in 1961, but has continued to serve the Company as a consultant since then.

Honorary member, R. H. Potts receives plaque from Past President, G. C. Cavanagh.

AOCS Member Receives Distinguished Service Award

Ruth R. Benerito ('55), research chemist at USDA's Southern Utilization Research and Development Division, New Orleans, La., has been chosen to receive that Department's highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award for her contributions to research in the field of chemistry. The award was presented by Secretary of Agriculture C. M. Hardin, May 19, 1970, in Washington, D.C.

R. R. Benerito

The citation for Dr. Benerito reads, "For distinguished service and contribution as teacher and researcher to the chemistry profession, particularly for basic research in physical chemistry and application of fundamental principles to solutions of applied research problems."

As leader of a research group at the Southern Division, Dr. Benerito has contributed significantly to the improvement of wash-wear and durable press cotton fabrics, and oil repellent finishes for cotton. Her discoveries along these lines explain many of the phenomena involved in the treatment of cotton fabrics to impart durable press or oil repellent properties to such materials, serving as guidelines for the development of such processes. She recently advanced a new theory to explain the fundamentals of crease proofing cotton. This theory aroused so much interest that she was invited to discuss it in greater detail at the Gordon Research Conference on Textiles, and the National Cotton Chemical Finishing Conference.

Dr. Benerito joined the Southern Division staff in 1953, and for the first few years she was engaged in research to develop fat emulsions for intravenous feeding, a project sponsored by the Office of the Surgeon General. Her accomplishments on this project added materially to the understanding of the stability of emulsions, and are widely used in emulsion technology.

The Distinguished Service Award is only one of many honors accorded Dr. Benerito. As a member of a group from the Southern Division, she received the Distinguished Service Award in 1964. In February of this year she was presented with the Garvan Medal, conferred by the American Chemical Society for distinguished service to the profession by American women chemists. In 1968, the U.S. Civil Service Commission honored her with the Federal Woman's Award, given to recognize distinguished achievement by women in all branches of the Federal service. That same year she also received the Southern Chemist Award, the first woman to receive this award, which is given for notable service to the profession of chemistry in the southeastern region. In 1967 she was selected as the Outstanding Federal Employee in the Greater New Orleans Area in the professional and scientific category.

Dr. Benerito is a member of numerous scientific societies, including the American Oil Chemists' Society, and has served as chairman of the research committee of the Gulf Coast Section of the American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists. She has held several offices in the local branch of the Scientific Research Society of America, and is a member of the Woman's Service Committee of the national organization of the American Chemical Society.

In addition to her other professional activities, Dr. Benerito is a lecturer in physical chemistry for Tulane Medical School, and on the staff of Tulane University. She received her B.S. in chemistry from Newcomb College, New Orleans, did graduate work at Bryn Mawr College, and earned her M.S. in Physics at Tulane University. Her Ph.D. in physical chemistry was conferred by the University of Chicago.