

Through Xerox Idealism to Charity

By BARBARA MOYNEHAN

Over morning cups of coffee my interview with the former vice president of Xerox and present author, Dr. John Dessauer, turned into a leisurely, informative conversation.

He is a distinguished, fit, 66-year-old man who immigrated to the United States in 1929. He worked for a photographic company in Binghamton, where he met his wife Margaret. He was fired in 1935.

He then moved to Rochester and joined the Rectigraph Co. which soon after merged with Haloid Co. It was then that he met Joseph Wilson, president of Haloid and the son of the family that owned it.

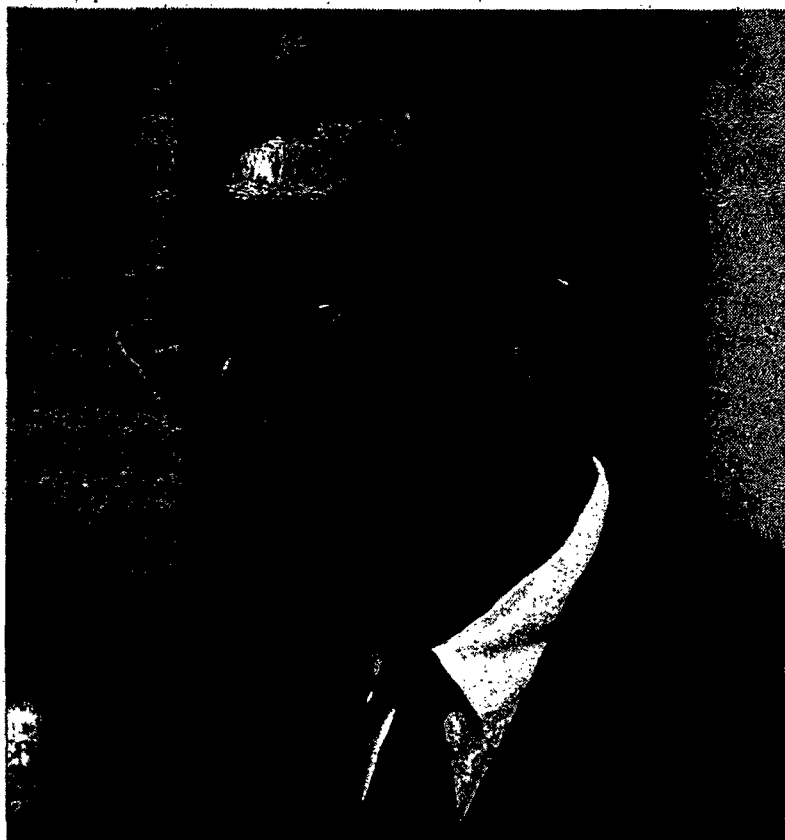
Dr. Dessauer enjoys talking of those early days when Haloid was a small photographic company in Rochester owned by the Wilson family, with Joseph as its president and business genius. Haloid heard of Chester S. Carlson who had invented the dry copy process and it was the acquisition of his invention that became the basis of what is now Xerox, a word derived from the Greek word "xeros" meaning dry.

Dessauer's book, "My Years with Xerox," is subtitled, "The Billions Nobody Wanted." It is a series of reminiscences telling the story of the people who launched Xerox on the road to success.

"I had collected data for over 20 years and when I retired, June 1970, I fulfilled an ambition I have had for many years. The final draft was completed in April 1971," he said.

Dr. Dessauer didn't mention to me the important role he played. He headed Xerox research activities for 33 years and more than anyone else is credited with the scientific development of Xerography. In 1946 he became vice president and he is now a member of its Board of Directors. As a result of his work he is recognized as one of the nation's outstanding scientists.

His credentials include a B.S. degree from the Institute of Technology in Munich, Germany; an M.S. and Doctor of Engineering Science from the Institute of Technology in Aachen, Germany. He is a member and councilor of the National Academy of Engineering, set up to provide means of assessing the constantly changing needs of the nation and the technical resources that should be applied to them; to sponsor programs aimed at meeting these needs, and to encourage



DR. DESSAUER

such engineering research as may be advisable in the national interest.

He is a trustee of the Rochester Museum and Science Center, of the Catholic Family Center, and of Fordham University. He is a fellow of the New York State Academy of Sciences and the American Institute of Chemists, just to name a few.

He explained why he wrote the book—first, to pay tribute to the intelligence and faith of Joseph Wilson, who refused to give up on electrophotography through 16 years of scientific and engineering problems and repeated prophecies of market analysts that the process would never sell.

He also wanted to pay tribute to America's system of free enterprise. "As an immigrant I feel I appreciate it more than most Americans. A Xerox or Horatio Alger could never happen any place else," he said.

Thirdly, the whole Xerox story proves that one can succeed and still do right by all the people involved: stock holders, employees, customers and the community. "I try to say, here is an example of people who were just and fair and still successful, just look at the success."

Dr. Dessauer feels very strongly that invention and innovation are the new frontier in the U.S. and he does not hes-

itate to praise scientists and engineers as the new captains of industry. He pointed out that invention and innovation help make new jobs and stimulate the growth of communities.

"I wanted to encourage others to do as we did," was the fourth reason he listed for writing about Xerox from the beginning.

He also wrote to praise the American patent system. He believes, "It is a very good way to encourage invention and I hope the U.S. will not stop this practice. It is an incentive for inventors."

The book was ghost written by Oscar Schisgall, who has written many books on his own. Doubleday & Co. bought the rights to the manuscript even before Dr. Dessauer began writing it.

"I didn't write a Harvard Business School financial textbook, but a popular book. And Mr. Schisgall helped make all my data and facts readable for the general public."

"I interviewed people all over the U.S. and England, just to get facts right in the people's own words, so no one could be offended."

But he feels the book is a Rochester story; it includes a lot of Rochester's history.

He is not completely happy with the ways of Doubleday.

"What I don't like about the Doubleday promotion is that it stresses the money of Xerox, when actually it was a group of men full of idealism that I wrote my book about."

Dessauer talked proudly of his three children and 10 grandchildren. His son John is a graduate of Le Moyne College and Cornell Law School and a trust officer at Security Trust. He has four daughters.

His other son, Tom, is a graduate of John Carroll University in Cleveland and manager of the First Federal Savings and Loan branch bank, downtown. He has two boys.

His daughter, Margot, is married to Gerard Norton Jr. who is an attorney and partner in the law firm, Kulley, Marks, Tannenbaum and Corbet. They have two boys and two girls.

Thinking it odd that neither of his sons followed their father's steps into the bonanza he helped create, I mentioned it and learned this:

"In the '40's Joe Wilson and I made a gentlemen's agree-

ment that none of our families would work for Xerox. We felt that it would discourage others who might be better qualified to work for the company, if families were there to get the top positions. So, no families of the top officials are employed."

After retiring from Xerox he set up his present office, J. D. M. Associates, in Pittsford. "To get out of my wife's kitchen," he joked, J. D. M. Associates is a nom-de-plume. The letters indicate himself (J.D.), his wife (M) and his children (Associates).

"I wrote my book in this office," he explained. "My work for the National Academy of Engineering is done here and I commute to Washington once a week, and I help Governor Rockefeller. I pursue my own business and have extended interest in various other businesses but I no longer do any work for profit, all is charity work."

"It is my plan," he concluded, "that all proceeds from my book will go to handicapped children."

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Area Sisters Discover Mission Work in Texas

The missionary spirit touched the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester this summer, as five Sisters journeyed 2,000 miles to assist the Sacred Hearts Fathers in a summer program for about 400 Mexican-American children.

The journey took Sisters Seraphine, Maria Concepta, Pius and Benita from the School of the Holy Childhood, and Sister Joan Margaret from Nazareth College to the diocese of Brownsville, Texas in the southern most tip of the United States early in June.

The sisters were invited to a town called Harlingen to work in a parish called Queen of Peace, staffed by the Sacred Hearts Fathers Francis Regis Kwiatkowski; Michael Annunziato; and Thomas McElroy.

The parish covers a great deal of territory in the town of Harlingen, Texas. It is the fourth and youngest parish in the town of 50,000 people, and

takes care of the spiritual needs of 1200 families or 9000 people.

Since Mexico is only 25 miles from the town the majority of the people are of Mexican descent. The people are bilingual, speaking Spanish and English, and their occupation is mostly farming.

The summer program was directed by Father McElroy, who was stationed at St. Peter and Paul in Rochester in 1967. It ran for six weeks.

Through the efforts of the fathers and sisters the children were offered a wide range of activities including swimming, movies, arts and crafts, sewing, music, sports and a daily religion class.

The sisters lived in a small home of one of the families who migrated to the north for the harvest. About one quarter of the parish is made up of migratory farm families.

During their stay, two of the sisters, Sister Maria Concepta and Sister Joan Margaret, celebrated their 25th anniversary as Sisters of St. Joseph. The parish had a celebration befitting such an occasion. More than 300 people attended an evening of entertainment prepared by the youth groups of the parish.

On July 25 the summer program ended with the First Communion Mass, concelebrated by Bishop Fitzpatrick and Father Regis, pastor of Queen of Peace.

Sister Seraphine described her summer as "Just a tremendous experience for all of us. We felt that we filled a real need in the church because there are so few sisters in that community. It was so edifying to watch the dedication of the fathers working with the Mexicans, we learned so much from them."