



Alexander Weber

As president of Caravan Products Co., Totowa, N.J., for 40 years, Alexander Weber made his mark on the baking industry not because of his longevity, but also for the significant impact his innovative ideas had on the efficiency of the baking process. As a result, he has been recognized as one of the newest entrants into the American Society of Baking Hall of Fame.

Born in New York City in 1921 and raised in the Bronx, Mr. Weber attended the City College of New York, where he graduated from with a degree in economics. He enlisted in the Army after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and served in the Philippines in communications.

Mr. Weber joined Caravan Products after his military service, and was named general manager in 1949 before being promoted to president in 1955. He began steering the company toward meaningful technology and hired the company's first cereal chemist.

During his time at Caravan, Mr. Weber was instrumental in the development of several processes that would have a lasting impact on the baking industry. Specifically, his use of no-time conditioners as well as bread bases and concentrates were groundbreaking.

Describing the way in which no-time and short-time processes have changed the baking industry, Laurie Gorton, executive editor of *Baking & Snack* magazine, said, "The traditional way to make bread is to use the sponge-and-dough method in which a partial dough (or sponge) is mixed and left to ferment for 3 to 6 hours, then the rest of the ingredients are added, and the dough goes through another fermentation of 1 to 3 hours. This process consumes a lot of time and space in the bakery, so the no-time and short-time methods were developed. These use dough improvers, oxidizing and reducing agents to cut down or eliminate altogether the fermentation time previously required. These doughs might get 10 to 15 minutes of 'floor time' but not much more.

"The use of no-time and short-time doughs allowed

bakers to cycle doughs faster through their bakeries, to get more products out the door in a shorter time. These methods also reduced the manpower required because the mixer operator no longer had to come in 4 or 5 hours ahead of the rest of the crew. It also reduced the equipment required: Only one mixer was now required, instead of two separate sponge and dough mixers."

Under Mr. Weber's leadership, Caravan was the first company to successfully develop and manufacture an extensive variety of bases for large and small bakers. He also offered special pack sizes presealed to a baker's requirement, making the baker's job easier and the final product outcome more predictable.

In addition to his technical expertise, Mr. Weber also was noteworthy in his approach to working with others in the baking industry.

In a nomination letter submitted to the American Society of Baking Hall of Fame Committee, a colleague recounted a



Alexander Weber at work in the laboratory.

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common phrase used by Mr. Weber: "Take care of your customers as they were your friends. There's nothing you wouldn't do for a good friend, right?"

"That insistence on helping bakers do their jobs better and easier was the cornerstone of Caravan Products," the colleague said. "Alex's infectious grin outlined by a well-trimmed moustache often shone through when he shared important Weber principles such as, 'Make the baker successful and he will do the same for you' or 'Existing customers first ... new customers second.'"

Mr. Weber retired from Caravan in 1994, at which point one of his sons, Joseph, was named president and chief executive officer of Caravan Products Co. and Carpro, Inc. Carpro was the parent company of Caravan; H.C. Brill Co., Tucker, Ga.; and Brokay Products Co., Philadelphia. Mr. Weber died in April 1996.

In 2003, Carpro, Inc. and its H.C. Brill Co., Inc. and Caravan operations were sold to CSM N.V., the world's largest specialist in ingredients and convenience products for the bakery sector, for \$302 million.

Both Brill and Caravan continue to operate as independent



Ron Savelli, president and chief executive officer of CSM Bakery Products North America, accepted the award on Mr. Weber's behalf.

companies within CSM Bakery Supplies North America.

In addition to his time at Caravan, Mr. Weber was a member of the board of trustees of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and a board member of the American Chess Foundation.

Ron Savelli, president and chief executive officer of CSM Bakery Products North America, accepted the Hall of Fame award on Mr. Weber's behalf.

"I know he'd be very honored," Mr. Savelli said. "He was a very humble man."

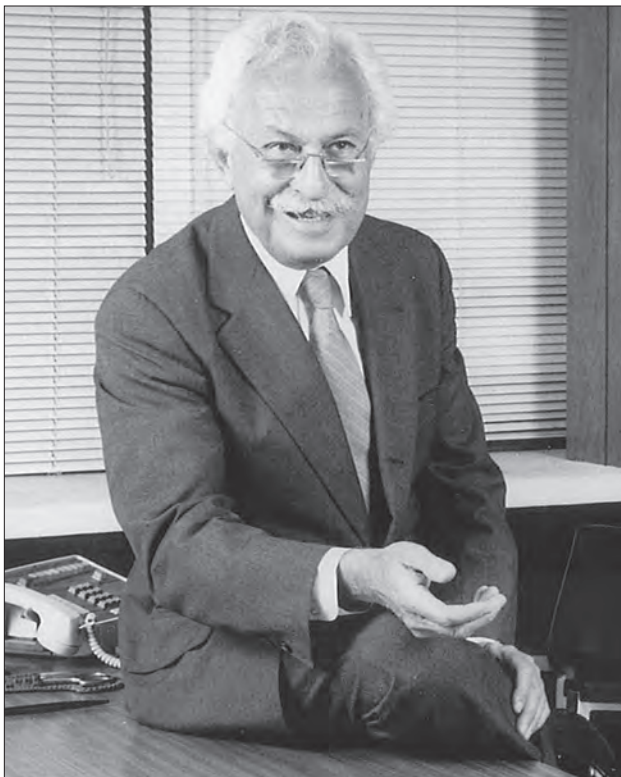
Mr. Savelli also noted that a modest demeanor kept Mr. Weber from attending many trade shows.

"He'd be appreciative (of the award), but he'd also be shy," he said.

Reflecting on his own relationship with Mr. Weber, Mr. Savelli said two things stood out.

"No. 1, his brilliance in interpreting people," he said. "He saw more in people than they saw in themselves. Why else would he hire me in 1988, a kid off the streets who didn't realize his potential?"

"No. 2, Mr. Weber said the most important ingredient is the baker. He always put the baker first." MBN



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Alexander Weber with his wife, Doris.