

focus on

Mass Spectrometry & Spectroscopy

Carol Tunick – 45 Years in Spectroscopy

Graham Meller, Buttonwood Marketing

In the year when Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin become the first humans to walk on the moon, Carol Tunick walked into Wilks Scientific Corporation for the first time. In 1969, the company manufactured a range of spectroscopy products and little did Carol know that her career would be inextricably linked to this technology for the next 45 years.

The early 1970s represented a tough time for American women in the workplace; average wages were around half of those for the male population and career advice often focused on secretarial training. However, the perception of women in society was changing, albeit slowly. Instead of focusing purely on housewives, the media had begun to depict businesswomen in programmes such as *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, and in politics, Isabel Martinez de Peron was elected the first woman President of Argentina in 1974, and Margaret Thatcher, a grocer's daughter, was elected as the first woman Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in 1979.

At Wilks Scientific, Carol soon became Product Manager for Infrared Sampling and Handling Accessories, and this necessitated regular visits to trade shows. However, such events were still largely the preserve of men and Carol has vivid memories of one particular American Chemical Society (ACS) Meeting near Chicago. "I had finished setting up the booth and was sitting in the hotel coffee shop," she explains, "when a gentleman sat down next to me and asked what I was doing. I explained that I was exhibiting our products at the show, and he then asked if I was a model. Slightly affronted, I informed him that I was in fact a Product Manager." At this point, one might have expected the man to have realised his mistake and to have apologised. However, as Carol continues: "He had difficulty accepting that I was a businesswoman and informed me that 'a woman's place is in the home' and if I were his wife, he would never allow this! In response, I got up, paid for my coffee, and told him: 'In that case, it's a very good thing I am not your wife!'" Thankfully Carol has had the good fortune to meet many more enlightened men than the unfortunate coffee shop misogynist. The late Paul Wilks, for example, founder of Wilks Scientific and subsequently Wilks Enterprise, did not suffer from any gender bias or stereotyping and was instrumental in Carol's successful career. Others such as Michael Pattison, the Publisher of *International LabMate*, and Keith Golding the founder of Quantitech in the UK, have worked with Carol for many decades and join the voluminous ranks of those that wish her well in her retirement.

Wilks Scientific was sold to The Foxboro Company in 1977 and Carol became Marketing Communications Manager for their newly formed Analytical Division for which Wilks Enterprise was the first of several acquisitions. She later became Marketing Communications Manager for Foxboro's Laboratory and Environmental Products. At this time, occupational safety and environmental regulations were driving the growth of the environmental instrumentation market and products such as the MIRAN gas analyser became extremely successful.

In 1990 the Foxboro operations in Connecticut were moved to Bridgewater in Massachusetts, so Carol left the business to launch her own marketing communications consulting firm, Carol Tunick Associates, which was based in Norwalk, CT and assisted various small and medium-sized clients in the industrial marketplace (primarily environmental) with their marketing, advertising, and sales promotion activities. However in 1995, returning once more to spectroscopy, she became one of the founding members of Wilks Enterprise, Inc with Paul Wilks. As Vice President and Secretary of the Corporation, Carol handled administrative, financial, and marketing/sales activities, both domestically and internationally.

Wilks Enterprise developed a range of application-specific mid-infrared analytical instruments for qualitative and quantitative measurements. Designed for use by both technical and non-technical staff, the Wilks analysers and spectrometers were employed both in the laboratory and in the field, in markets such as biofuels, petrochemical, environmental, quality control and manufacturing industries. After nineteen hugely successful years, Wilks Enterprise was sold to Spectro Scientific, Inc. in October 2013 and Carol remained as Vice President for the Wilks products until her retirement in August 2014.

Looking back over a long career in instrumentation, Carol says: "There have been seismic changes in the market since those early days when we judged the success of our marketing initiatives by the size of the pile of 'bingo' reply cards that we received. Today, customers can expect a much faster response; the internet has enabled lightning fast communications and a wealth of information is now available 24/7."



"The internet has also affected trade shows. There was a time when companies geared their product launches around major shows and if you wanted to stay up to date and see what's new, you needed to attend these events. Today, this information is simply a click or two away and more companies are now putting on Webinars to introduce new products and to train sales representatives, service engineers and customers. However, in today's Google-centric world potential customers mostly only find what they are looking for, and not necessarily what they are not looking for. That might sound odd, but if you read a magazine, or visit a trade show, you see things that you didn't expect, you meet people that you didn't know, and you find things that you weren't looking for.

"So, with the benefit of hindsight, if I can give a word of advice to the newcomers in our industry, it would be to remember that people do business with people; the users of instrumentation need to trust their suppliers, so face to face interaction is vitally important. Sure, the internet has radically improved the capability of manufacturers to spread their messages to the farthest corners of the globe. The speed and effectiveness of marketing communications has meant that even the smallest of companies can compete globally, but at the end of the day, long-term success is about building relationships and I, for one, am extremely grateful for the friends that I have been fortunate enough to have made since I first discovered the effects of light on different chemical compounds."



Foxboro Representative Meeting, Mont - Gabriel, Quebec, 4th-6th June 1987

BOTTOM ROW (left to right): Joel Johnson (Pioneer), Ken Konrad (Intak), Dorothy Harms (Raeco), Tom Frauenhofer (Eirtech), Mary Lynn Watson (Eirtech), Bill Stabell (Foxboro), Ted Finucane (Hi-Tech), Gladys Finucane (Hi-Tech), Ron Ekstrom (Raeco), Ed Nobrega (Foxboro), Gerry Flanagan (EDC), Gina Cheetham (On-Site).

SECOND ROW (left to right): Donald Dickey (Delta), Stan Dolin (Foxboro), Curt Fauth (Foxboro), Fred Tippett (Foxboro), Carol Tunick (Foxboro), John Foxton (Eirtech), Allen Bickel (Foxboro), Sam Lanasa (Cascade), Keith Golding (Quantitech - U.K.), Raymond Lindeen (Houston Analytical), Eileen Maloney (Foxboro).

THIRD ROW (left to right): Larry Bell (Bell & Assoc.), Warren McGowan (Smith & Denison), Bill Hill (Hiltech), Steve Day (Foxboro), Ed Green (ETA), Ron Kleinschmidt (Raeco), Dave Keifer (Newcomb Assoc.), Gil Cossette (Nortech), Wally Ekstrom (Raeco), Susan Dempster (Foxboro), Bob Warnick (ETA).

TOP ROW (left to right): Paul Jacobetz (Foxboro), Murray Ward (Extech), Klaus Elsaesser (Nortech), Steve Creech (Smith & Denison), Larry Cheetham (On-Site), Mike Clark (Clark Tech), John Mcstravick (Foxboro), Steve Williams (Applied Safety), Paul Frauenhofer (Eirtech).