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WILLIAM H. DAVIDOW

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by
David C. Brock
at
Palo Alto, California
on
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This oral history is part of a series supported by grants from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. This series is an important resource for the history of semiconductor electronics, documenting the life and career of Gordon E. Moore, including his experiences and those of others in Shockley Semiconductor, Fairchild Semiconductor, Intel, as well as contexts beyond the semiconductor industry.

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WILLIAM H. DAVIDOW

1935 Born in Reading, Pennsylvania on 6 April

Education

1957 A.B., Electrical Engineering, Dartmouth College
1958 M.S., Electrical Engineering, Dartmouth College
1959 M.S., Electrical Engineering, California Institute of Technology
1961 Ph.D., Electrical Engineering, Stanford University

Professional Experience

1961-1965 General Electric
Manager, Peripheral Equipment Laboratory

1965-1969 Hewlett-Packard
Manager, Marketing and Sales

1969-1973 Signetics Memory Systems
Vice President, Marketing

1973-1985 Intel Corporation
Vice President, Microcomputer division
Vice President, Microcomputer Systems division
Senior Vice President, Marketing and Sales

1985-Present Mohr Davidow Ventures
Founding General Partner
ABSTRACT

William H. Davidow begins the interview by describing his early interest in science and technology. After a five-year program and obtaining his M.S. in electrical engineering at Dartmouth College, Davidow decided to pursue science over business and enrolled in the California Institute of Technology. After obtaining his M.S. at Caltech and his Ph.D. at Stanford University, Davidow worked at General Electric on peripheral devices. Davidow realized that his talent was in marketing rather than science, and moved on to marketing positions. After working at Hewlett-Packard and Signetics Memory Systems, Davidow moved to Intel and became responsible for marketing of its microprocessor development systems. Eventually Davidow was charged with running the microprocessor division, and embarked on a massive marketing campaign called “Operation Crush.” After the success of Operation Crush Davidow moved to work in Intel’s marketing and sales division; this is the time period during which increasing Japanese competition forced Intel to withdraw from the memory business and focus of microprocessors. Davidow concludes the interview by offering his thoughts on Moore’s Law, interactions and philanthropic work associated with Moore, and the impact Gordon Moore has had on Davidow’s life.

INTERVIEWER

David C. Brock is a senior research fellow with the Center for Contemporary History and Policy of the Chemical Heritage Foundation. As an historian of science and technology, he specializes in oral history, the history of instrumentation, and the history of semiconductor science, technology, and industry. Brock has studied the philosophy, sociology, and history of science at Brown University, the University of Edinburgh, and Princeton University (respectively and chronologically). His most recent publication is Understanding Moore’s Law: Four Decades of Innovation (Philadelphia: Chemical Heritage Press), 2006, which he edited and to which he contributed.
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