

# **Carcinogen, mutagen, teratogen, oh my: How I started a career in chemical information**

---

**Mary Talmadge-Grebenar  
Bristol-Myers Squibb Company**

**Presentation at the 231st ACS National Meeting  
March 26, 2006**

## □ The Story Line

- College
- My first “real” job
- The jump to pharma
- The BIG switch
- Life after the lab
- How to get from there to here

# College

- ❑ Hofstra University – Long Island, NY
- ❑ What major should I be? - Business to Chemistry to History to Biochemistry (graduated with a BS in Biochemistry)
- ❑ Every college student needs money so why not work in the library's cataloging department



Hauser Hall  
(Chemistry Building)



Axinn Library

# My First “Real” Job

Allied Corporation – Morristown, NJ  
(Now Honeywell)

Applications Chemist working with  
polyethylenes

- So how do you make a better soda bottle anyway?



The first “real” job isn’t always the right job

# The Jump to Pharma

- ❑ **Ayerst Laboratories – Monmouth Junction, NJ (now Wyeth)**
- ❑ **Research assistant in a medicinal chemistry lab focused on neuroscience and gastrointestinal therapies**
- ❑ **At the bench – wow, why is it that all these bottles say...carcinogen, mutagen, and teratogen on them?**



# The BIG Switch

- ❑ As a BS level scientist, always the hands, never the brains in the lab
- ❑ Hmm...what else can a girl do?
- ❑ Chemistry and library work, both about solving puzzles and doing detective work
- ❑ Gee, I've always liked libraries...
- ❑ Hello Rutgers, can you connect me to the Dean at SCILS?
- ❑ GREs, Transcripts, Grad School application – how do you use MSWord on a Macintosh?



# The BIG Switch

- ❑ Yeah!! accepted to Grad school
- ❑ Four months later...Look, there is an opening for a chemical and patent searcher in the library at Ayerst
- ❑ The dreaded job interview and the wait
- ❑ I got the job!!
- ❑ “It is easier to teach a chemist to search than it is to teach a searcher chemistry” – Judy Gotkis

# Life After the Lab

- ❑ **Information Scientist – Chemical and Patent Information (first release of STN Express) at Wyeth-Ayerst (1988 – 1991)**
- ❑ **Graduated from Library School in May 1990**
- ❑ **Senior Information Scientist - Chemistry searching with biomedical, toxicology, and pharmaceuticals thrown in, the first chance to try my management wings and to do a little strategic planning at DuPont-Merck Pharmaceuticals (1991-93)**



# Life After the Lab

## □ Bristol-Myers Squibb

- Many titles and many roles over the last 12+ years
- Titles
  - ▶ Senior Information Scientist I
  - ▶ Senior Information Scientist II
  - ▶ Manager
  - ▶ Associate Director

# Life After the Lab

## □ Bristol-Myers Squibb

### ■ Roles

- ▶ Literature Searcher - chemistry (medicinal, analytical, process, engineering), biomedicine, toxicology, regulatory, and clinical.
- ▶ Trainer - first formal training program for libraries' products and services
- ▶ Content Manager - acquiring, managing, and deploying content via the intranet (PDR, e-journals, databases, etc.)
- ▶ Knowledge Integrator - information professional assigned to a specific therapeutic area team
- ▶ Manager of people - lead a team of eight info pros plus strategic planning, product management...

# How to Get from There to Here

- ❑ Figure out what your good at and what you like
- ❑ Do you have transferable knowledge and skills?
  - Can you apply what you've learned in a new venue?
  - Today, SciFinder and internet search skills give you a leg up in moving from the lab to the library
- ❑ Communication skills and subject matter knowledge are key
- ❑ Find a mentor in the “library world”
- ❑ Be plugged in - build and maintain a network
- ❑ Be a mentor later in your career



# Contact Information

**Mary Talmadge-Grebenar**

**Bristol-Myers Squibb**

**mary.talmadge-grebenar@bms.com**

**609-252-5427**