

An Interested Joiner

Arthur Amory Houghton Jr.

ARTHUR AMORY HOUGHTON JR. is one of the most impressive joiners in town. The new president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art is a vice chairman of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and of the Fund for the Advancement of Education. He is a vice presi-

Man
in the
News

dent of the Corning Museum of Glass and the Pierpont Morgan Library. He is board chairman of

Cooper Union, and his trusteeships compare with those of the United Nations. He is a trustee of the Metropolitan, the New York Public Library, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Institute of International Education. He is also a director of the Philharmonic Symphony Society of New York, whose board he once headed.

Mr. Houghton does not join for sociability, status or solvency—he has sufficient status as president of Steuben Glass, Inc., a director of its parent company, the Corning Glass Works, and as a director of the New York Life Insurance Company, the United States Steel Corporation and Diebold, Inc.

Believes in Doing

He joins because he believes things should be done and because he is interested. He is quiet at meetings, his colleagues say, but when everybody has said his say, he speaks up softly and cogently, with thoughts on the subject that often form the basis of action.

"He doesn't speak much except to the point," a friend said.

"He is more at ease with personal friends than when he is in public," said another associate. "The unusual thing is that when he has an idea, he will carry it through, sketching it out on paper and saying specifically how it can be done."

There is general agreement that he is hard-driving once he is convinced of where to drive.

In the light of all this, it is unproductive to ask about his hobbies. He travels a lot, although lately he has rarely been away for more than two weeks at a time from his headquarters in the Corning offices at 717 Fifth Avenue, one of the early glass-packaged buildings here.

The glass company executive was born on Dec. 12, 1906, at Corning, N.Y., home of the Corning organization owned by the Houghton family. While an undergraduate at Harvard—class of '29—he conceived a passion for literature and rare books. He entered the family business when he finished college and started collecting.

Mr. Houghton's business and collection grew. He stocked original manuscripts and letters of Samuel Pepys, Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, James Boswell and Samuel Johnson, and he had one of the largest collections anywhere of the works of John Keats, Edmund Spenser and Lewis Carroll.

In 1933, he welded an interest in the arts to an interest



Fabian Bachrach

Converts ideas into action

in his business and became president of Corning's Steuben division. One Sunday, he and John M. Gates, an architect and the company's vice president, smashed some 20,000 bits of glassware with a value on the books of \$1 million in the company's warehouses. Then they started from the bottom to build a quality-glass business that would incorporate imaginative design in technically superb crystal.

The smashing of the old inventory was productive. The new designs were exhibited, hailed and sold.

By 1940, business was fine, and Mr. Houghton submitted, to the blandishments of Archibald MacLeish, then Librarian of Congress. He went to Washington and became curator of rare books, a job he thoroughly enjoyed for two years until the United States entered World War II. Mr. Houghton left the library, although he still holds the titles of honorary curator and honorary consultant in English bibliography there, and joined the Air Force as a captain. By the time the last shot was fired, he was a lieutenant colonel.

Honored by 11 Colleges

Returning to civilian life, Mr. Houghton plunged into the many affairs that have claimed his time since.

He advanced on business fronts, cultural fronts and educational fronts. He has gathered honorary degrees from 11 colleges. He was in politics—in 1960 he was chairman of the United Republican Finance Committee.

He built the rare-book library that bears the Houghton name at Harvard. He was intensely interested in artistry in glass and played the leading role in building the glass museum and library at Corning, which attracts thousands on summer days.

Mr. Houghton lives with his third wife, the former Miss Elizabeth Douglas McCall, at their apartment at 3 Sutton Place and spends time at his country home, the Wye Plantation, in Queens-town, Md., when he can get away for a short weekend. He has three daughters, one son and four grandchildren.