

history of humanity. We're commemorating a weighing, and for those of you who are not chemists, I think the full impact of what it means to weigh something perhaps doesn't register. Although there have been many elaborate and very important techniques evolved to probe into the nature of chemical matter, the touchstone for the evolution of an element's chemistry comes from the preparation of a pure compound, and weighing plays a fundamental part in knowing that one has a pure compound.

I would like, if I may, to share a little reflective glory in this by telling a small story. I don't know what the libel laws are in the State of Illinois, so I will make this short. As already mentioned there are others who carried out some of the initial steps in the separation of plutonium from rather bulky amounts of material down to where the microchemists could take over. A number of us worked on this. And at one stage some of this fell into my care. As I remember, the material was in a beaker of perhaps a half a liter or so when it was put away for the night. The next morning the beaker was broken. A lead brick had fallen over, and here was this precious material spilled. Fortunately, it happened to be sitting on a Sunday edition of the *Chicago Tribune*. A half a liter of anything is nothing for this paper to absorb and we proceeded to get the very largest evaporating dish we could find. It was larger than a bathtub and smaller than a swimming pool, and we dumped this in with the idea of subjecting it to what the chemists call wet ashing. We digested it with nitric acid and kept this witches brew going for days. Which reminds me that this is September 10, and if it weren't for my participation in the isolation of plutonium, this anniversary would probably be celebrated in August.

Well, we finally got all this in the solution and I remember vividly that the print still floated. I was very grateful for having that newspaper there, and I cannot avoid reflecting that among the Democrats of left-wing persuasion, I'm probably the only one that digested an edition of the *Chicago Tribune* so thoroughly.

GLENN T. SEABORG We have been reviewing the work of one of the sections in the Chemistry Division of the Metallurgical Laboratory, namely the Plutonium Section. But there were three other important sections. These sections were under the overall leadership of the successive Chemistry Division Leaders. First there was Frank Spedding, then James Franck, and then Thorfin Hogness, who played a vital role in the direction of the overall chemistry program.

George Boyd was the section chief of the Analytical Chemistry Section, which performed the analyses that were so vital at all stages to