

TADEUSZ SENDZIMIR

"The usual proverb is that necessity is the mother of invention, but it has not been in my case. I was thinking: They do it that way and I don't like it. I think I'll do something better!"

— Tadeusz Sendzimir

Tadeusz Sendzimir, whose company T. Sendzimir, Inc. has been headquartered in Waterbury since 1943, was an engineer and inventor of international renown. His name has been given to revolutionary methods of processing steel and metals used in every industrialized nation of the world and he has been called the greatest inventor in the steel industry since Henry Bessemer.

Dr. Sendzimir was born on July 15, 1894 in Lwow, Poland where he studied at the Polytechnic Institute. After working for three years in Kiev, Russia, he traveled across Siberia to Shanghai where he built the first factory in China to produce screws, nails and wire. Designing and making his own machines, he began experimenting with a new way to galvanize steel that would ultimately revolutionize the steel industry.

In 1929, Dr. Sendzimir tried unsuccessfully to interest American industrialists in his method, but met with skepticism and distrust. Returning to Poland in 1930, he obtained support for the construction of the first industrial-scale galvanizing unit and put into operation several cold strip mills. By 1938, Armco steel, an American company, was interested in his work and they formed a partnership, the Armzen Company, to oversee the worldwide expansion of the mill's use. He opened his first mill in the United States in 1939, and in the spring of 1943, moved his offices to Waterbury where they have remained. With companies in 33 countries, 85-90% of the world's stainless steel passed through Sendzimir Inc. in the early 1980's.

In 1974, Dr. Sendzimir received the Brinell Gold Medal, the engineer's equivalent of the Nobel Prize, from the Royal Academy of Technical Sciences in Stockholm; personally presented by King Gustav of Sweden. Among other awards he received are the Golden Cross of Merit presented by the President of Poland in 1938, the prestigious Bessemer Gold Medal of the Iron and Steel Institute in 1965 and on the 100th anniversary of the Statue of Liberty, he was one of the immigrants honored for their contributions to America.

In 1990, a further tribute was paid him by his native land when Poland's largest steel plant (formerly the Lenin Steelworks) was renamed the Tadeusz Sendzimir Steelworks in recognition of his unique contributions to the steel industry worldwide. The subject of a biography entitled, *Steel Will*, he died on September 1, 1989.

