sary to bring the situation under control. To assist the company in evaluating the truly astounding volume of studies beginning to appear in the medical literature on asbestos, it hired as a practically full-time consultant Dr. George W. Wright of the Medical Research Department at St. Luke's Hospital in Cleveland, who was himself a well-known asbestos researcher. It began a major outreach program of assistance and cooperation to government and private scientists worldwide, including Dr. Selikoff, who were seeking remedies to the emerging problem. It established particularly close links with the asbestos industry in Great Britain, where the problem had reached the acute stage years earlier and where much of the most valuable asbestos-health research was being conducted, a good deal of it being funded or at a minimum being cooperated in by the various English asbestos companies.

It always struck me as unique to the British system that a spirit of cooperation and joint purpose existed between the asbestos industry in the U.K. and Her Majesty's Factory Inspectorate, the regulatory group charged with policing industrial health in policies in that country. It was a far cry from the adversarial situation that would shortly develop in the United States with the establishment, both in 1970, of the EPA and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Building a Communications Team

To manage the issue, J-M established an internal asbestos-health management committee, chaired by then-president Clint Burnett. It met at least monthly and included Solon, representing public relations, and Dr. Wright as outside medical consultant. Apart from the upper management committee, a separate public relations committee was formed consisting of Solon, Raines, and myself. Through Solon, and eventually on our own, Raines and I had access to Dr. Wright and to J-M's two top environmental control experts, Ed Fenner and Cliff Sheckler, for their assistance in developing responses to questions raised in the media regarding either the health side of the issue or Manville's own efforts at bringing the problem under control. At the none-too-subtle prodding of our English industry cousins, who believed the communications side of the issue in the U.S. was being mishandled if it was being handled at all, J-M retained the PR firm of Hill and Knowlton as outside consultants. H&K, which had recently passed Carl Byoir and Associates to become the largest PR firm in the world, had been on retainer to the British industry for a number of years. The account was placed in H&K's recently established Environmental Health Unit, the first division in any PR firm dedicated solely to assisting clients in responding to health and safety issues. Together with the H&K staff, it was our job to bring the communications side of the problem under control.