

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

ANDREW CAMILLI

The Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

William Van Benschoten

at

Tufts University Medical School
Boston, Massachusetts

on

7, 8, 10, and 11 October 2002

From the Original Collection of the University of California, Los Angeles



Andrew Camilli

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ANDREW CAMILLI

1963 Born in Lima, Ohio, on 27 September

Education

1987 B.S., Microbiology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
1992 Ph.D., Microbiology, University of Pennsylvania

Professional Experience

1992-1995 Harvard Medical School
Postdoctoral Fellow, Damon Runyon-Walter Winchell
Cancer Fund

1995-present Tufts University Medical School
Assistant Professor

Honors

1983 William J. Branstrom Award for Academic Achievement, University of Michigan

1983 Michigan Competitive Scholarship, University of Michigan

1987 Graduated with high distinction, University of Michigan

1992-1995 Damon Runyon-Walter Winchell Cancer Fund Postdoctoral Fellowship Award

1997-2001 Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences Grant

2002 Eli Lilly and Company Research Award

Selected Publications

- Camilli, A., C. R. Paynton, and D. A. Portnoy. 1989. "Intracellular Methicillin Selection of *Listeria monocytogenes* Mutants Unable to Replicate in a Macrophage Cell Line". *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. (USA)* 86: 5522-5526.
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ABSTRACT

Andrew Camilli was born in Lima, Ohio, a factory town, the fifth of seven children. After Andrew's birth, the family moved to Flint, Michigan, where his father worked as a banker. Camilli's parents were both quite influential in his intellectual development, both being proponents of obtaining a good education. His father's broad interests also introduced Andrew to science at a young age. He attended a public grammar school and then a parochial high school while in Flint, reading about science, being interested in and playing sports (though not for high school teams).

He enrolled at the University of Michigan, Flint, intending to pursue a degree in computer science, but after taking a human genetics course, he decided he wanted a career in biological research. Soon he transferred to the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, to study biology and medical microbiology. While an undergraduate he had the opportunity to work in Robert B. Helling's and Julian Adams's laboratories, as well an opportunity to intern during his summers at Pharmacia and Upjohn (about which he addressed the pros and cons of being in industry).

After graduation, Camilli matriculated at Washington University in St. Louis, rotating through Daniel A. Portnoy's, William L. Goldwin's, and Roy Curtiss III's laboratories. When Portnoy left for the University of Pennsylvania, Camilli followed in order to complete his doctoral work on the genes for virulence factors in *Listeria monocytogenes*. He undertook a postdoctoral fellowship in John J. Mekalanos's lab at Harvard University focusing on a recombinase reporter system for genetic expression before accepting a faculty position at the Tufts University School of Medicine.

After setting up his own laboratory Camilli received the Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences award providing him with funding to explore important and interesting directions in his research. Genes remained the central aspect of his science, so he focused his lab on genetic expression in *Vibrio cholerae* and gene regulation in *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, which, he acknowledges, has practical applications to understandings of health and disease.

The interview concludes with Camilli's reflections on various topics related to his science, his life, and his career. He discusses the ways in which his role in the laboratory has changed over time, his teaching responsibilities, his management style, especially as it relates to his mentors' styles, and balancing his career with his family. He ends with his thoughts on competition in science; the national research agenda; collaboration; and, of course, what he enjoys most about being a scientist.

UCLA INTERVIEW HISTORY

INTERVIEWER:

William Van Benschoten, Interviewer, UCLA Oral History Program. B.A., History, University of California, Riverside; M.A., History, University of California, Riverside; C. Phil., History, UCLA

TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

Place: Camilli's office, Tufts University.

Dates, length of sessions: October 7, 2002; October 8, 2002; October 10, 2002; and October 11, 2002.

Total number of recorded hours: 7.0

Persons present during interview: Camilli and Van Benschoten.

CONDUCT OF INTERVIEW:

This interview is one in a series with Pew Scholars in the Biomedical Sciences conducted by the UCLA Oral History Program in conjunction with the Pew Charitable Trusts's Pew Scholars in the Biomedical Sciences Oral History and Archives Project. The project has been designed to document the backgrounds, education, and research of biomedical scientists awarded four-year Pew scholarships since 1988.

To provide an overall framework for project interviews, the director of the UCLA Oral History Program and three UCLA faculty project consultants developed a topic outline. In preparing for this interview, Van Benschoten held a telephone preinterview conversation with Camilli to obtain written background information (curriculum vitae, copies of published articles, etc.) and agree on an interviewing schedule. He also reviewed prior Pew scholars's interviews and the documentation in Camilli's file at the Pew Scholars Program office in San Francisco, including his proposal application, letters of recommendation, and reviews by Pew Scholars Program national advisory committee members.

ORIGINAL EDITING:

Carol Squires edited the interview. She checked the verbatim transcript of the interview against the original tape recordings, edited for punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling, and verified proper names. Words and phrases inserted by the editor have been bracketed.

Camilli reviewed the transcript. He verified proper names and made a number of corrections and additions.

Carol Squires prepared the table of contents. William Van Benschoten, senior writer,

assembled the biographical summary and interview history, and compiled the index.

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