

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

MARILYN C. PIKE

The Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

Robert Kohler and Frances Kohler

at

Massachusetts General Hospital
Boston, Massachusetts

on

6 June 1991

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

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This oral history is part of a series supported by a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts based on the Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences. This collection is an important resource for the history of biomedicine, recording the life and careers of young, distinguished biomedical scientists and of Pew Biomedical Scholar Advisory Committee members.



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(Signature) Marilyn C. Pike
Marilyn C. Pike

(Date) 11/29/91

MARILYN C. PIKE

1951 Born in Oakridge, Tennessee on May 19

Education

1973 BA, Zoology, Duke University
1979 PhD, Microbiology-Immunology, Duke University
1984 MD, Duke University

Professional Experience

1984-1986 Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA
Resident, Medical Services

1986-present University of Michigan Medical Center, Ann Arbor, MI
Clinical Intern in Medicine, Department of Medicine

Honors

1977 National Science Foundation National Fellowship
1979 Jim McGinnis Award for Basic Research
1979 American Federation for Clinical Research, Southern Society,
Student Research Award

1983 Alpha Omega Alpha
1984 American Medical Women's Achievement Citation
1987 Pew Scholar in the Biomedical Sciences Award

ABSTRACT

Marilyn Pike grew up in Westchester, New York. Her father was a chemical engineer who was interested in desalination, even patenting a freeze-drying process for Maxwell House Coffee. Her mother was a housewife. Pike credits her high-school biology teacher for inspiring her career in science. She majored in zoology at Duke University but became interested in biochemistry in Irwin Fridovich's class. After graduation Pike worked for three years as a technician in Ralph Snyderman's lab, publishing several papers. She decided to go to graduate school, staying at Duke and continuing to work in Snyderman's lab. There she began work with phospholipids, work that continues in her lab today.

When lab work became boring, Pike decided to go to medical school, again at Duke. She finished her MD in three years and moved to University of Michigan to complete her internship and residency. While there she married Richard Mulligan. He was at the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research, so Pike found a job at Massachusetts General Hospital, with an assistant professorship at Harvard University; her lab's new work there concerns IL 8. Funding has become so difficult, however, that Pike feels she will probably look at other options, such as chief of medicine or consulting for a drug company.

Pike talks about her own perfectionism, her love of working with her hands, her need to control. She likes unambiguous results for experiments and likes doing graphics. She likes the congeniality and fun of small labs but thinks that they are a thing of the past, partly because of funding and partly because of the complexity of today's science. She talks about politics in hospital administration and the increasing need for a businessman as chief executive officer, detailing some of what she thinks are Harvard's mistakes in administration of funding. She concludes with some discussion of the problems facing women in academia.

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<p>Attends Duke University. Zoology major. Irwin Fridovich's biochemistry class. Considers medical school; no lab experience; women discouraged; expensive. Technician in Ralph Snyderman's lab. Publishes. Collaborative and friendly group: Robert Lefkowitz, Rusty Williams, Nicholas Kredich. Learns technical skills from Christine Stahl.</p>	
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<p>Stays at Duke. National Science Foundation (NSF) funding. PhD projects and publications. Interest in lipid chemistry. Prefers more objective, less biological results as with receptor research. Perfectionist who likes working with her hands. Likes getting results with no ambiguity; likes doing graphics.</p>	
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