

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

PHILIP M. ROSOFF

The Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

Susan Lindee and Sarah Goldfine

at

Coronado, California

on

4 March 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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Philip M. Rosoff

(Date)

7/10/91

PHILIP M. ROSOFF

1952 Born in Philadelphia, PA on October 17

Education

1974 BA, Biology and Psychology, New York University
1978 MD, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine

Professional Experience

1981-1982 Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
Post Doctorate, Cell Immunology
1982-1985 Post Doctorate, Biochemistry

1983-1985 Dana-Farber Cancer Institute/Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA
Instructor, Pediatrics

1985-present Tufts University School of Medicine/New England Medical Center,
Boston, MA
Assistant Professor, Physiology & Pediatrics

Honors

1977 Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society
1978 Honors in Medicine, Surgery, Pediatrics, OB/GYN; Dept. of Peds.
Award, CWRU School of Medicine
1987 Pew Scholar in the Biomedical Sciences Award

ABSTRACT

Philip M. Rosoff grew up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His parents were both college-educated and put a high value on education; as a result they sent Rosoff to Friends Select School. He entered New York University (NYU), majoring in biology. He became interested in neuroscience, but he stuck with premed courses in order to please his parents.

For medical school Rosoff chose Case Western Reserve University, which started its medical students in clinical work in their first year. He found he liked and was good at medicine, but he still wanted to do science. Attracted to pediatrics and impressed by three pediatricians who did medicine and science, he went to Boston Children's Hospital for his residency. In his last year he began working in hematology/oncology with Harvey Cohen, staying at Boston Children's Hospital and Dana-Farber Cancer Center. When Cohen left for the University of Rochester Rosoff went into Vicki Sato's immunology lab; shortly thereafter he went to Lewis Cantley's lab, working in the biochemistry of cell signaling.

Cantley moved to Tufts University, and Rosoff accepted an assistant professorship there as well. There he got his own lab in a growing department, one looking for MDs who would also do science. Rosoff decided to change his clinical status to science. He met and married Dona Chikaraishi, a molecular biologist at Tufts. Rosoff has been learning the challenges of running a lab: funding, competition for students, and the difference between graduate students and medical students. He now has a brilliant student, Chandra Mohan, who is working on a new signaling receptor they found—by chance—on the surface of human T cells.

Rosoff talks about his calcium channel project and possible collaboration with another Pew Scholar, Michael Snyder. He thinks science is becoming more difficult and competitive. Funding is tight and sometimes arbitrarily awarded. He discusses the changes in technology. He believes that science is a contribution to knowledge and that knowledge advances society. In ten years Rosoff hopes to be doing the same work he is doing now but with more secure funding and a larger lab.

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