

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

ANDREW KOFF

The Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

William Van Benschoten

at

Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
New York City, New York

on

13, 14 and 15 August 2002

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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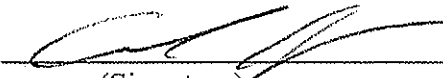
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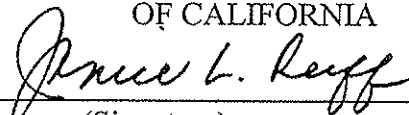
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ANDREW KOFF

1962 Born in Jamaica, New York on 7 September

Education

1985 B.S., Biochemistry, State University of New York, Stony Brook

1990 Ph.D., Molecular Microbiology, State University of New York, Stony Brook

Professional Experience

1991-1993 Fred Hutchison Cancer Research Center, Seattle, Washington
Postdoctoral Fellow, Cell Cycle Regulation

1993-present Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York City, New York
Assistant Member

Honors

1996-2000 Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences Grant

ABSTRACT

Andrew Koff was born and raised in New York the elder child of four siblings, with three younger sisters. He attended Long Beach High School in New York, influenced by Jeffrey Elias, his high school biology teacher. Koff matriculated at the State University of New York, Stony Brook, majoring in political science. While an undergraduate he worked as a technician in Peter Tegtmeier's lab on *SV40* large T-antigen; he decided to remain at Stony Brook for his graduate studies and researched herpes simplex virus replication. From there he began a postdoctoral fellowship in James M. Roberts's laboratory at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center in Seattle, Washington, studying cyclin E; he collaborated with Joan Massague on cyclin E-CDK2 activity. After Seattle, Koff accepted a position at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, New York, and focused his lab on p27 interactions and regulation, on developing mouse models mimicking p27 activity, on cyclins in meiosis, and on angiogenesis.

The interview concludes with his thoughts on grant writing and the peer review process; balancing family and career; the importance of being familiar with the history and context of a particular field of research; the pressures of publication and production in the scientific community; dealing with a stutter; what it is like to be a primary investigator at a prestigious research institute; and the impact of the Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences on his career.

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: Koff's office, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

Dates, length of sessions: August 13, 2002 (115 minutes); August 14, 2002 (134 minutes); August 15, 2002 (86 minutes).

Total number of recorded hours: 5.65

Persons present during interview: Koff 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 Koff to obtain written background information (curriculum vitae, copies of published articles, etc.) and agree on an interviewing schedule. He also reviewed prior Pew scholars' interviews and the documentation in Koff'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.

Koff 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. Deborah compiled the index.

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