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**TOSHIO TSUKIYAMA**

The Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences

Transcript of an Interview  
Conducted by

William Van Benschoten

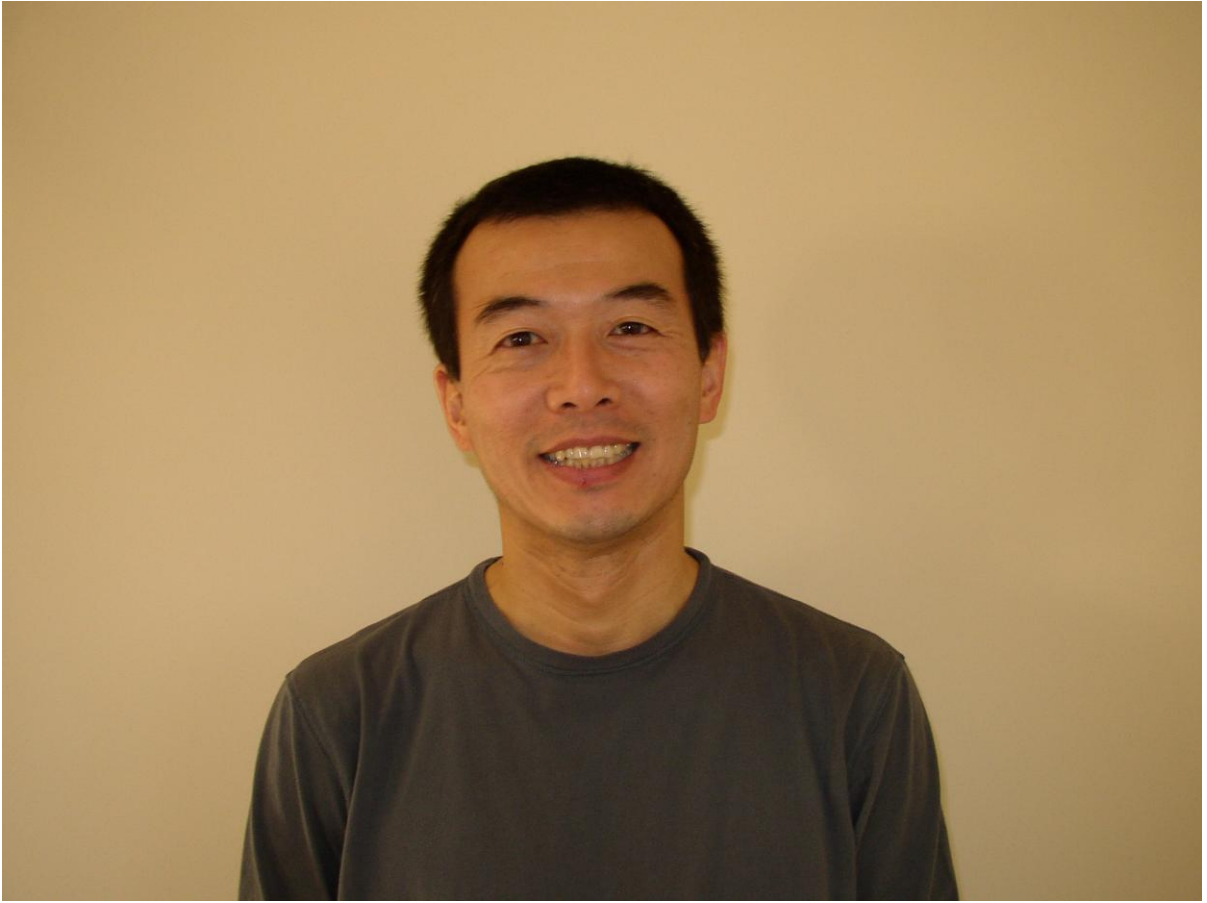
at

The Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center  
Seattle, Washington

on

24 and 27 October 2003

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Toshio Tsukiyama

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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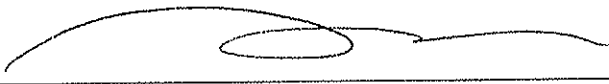
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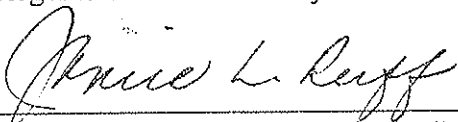
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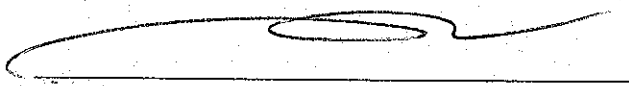
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## TOSHIO TSUKIYAMA

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### Education

D.V.M., Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine  
Ph.D., Hiroshima University

### Professional Experience

National Institutes of Health  
Postdoctoral Fellow in the laboratory of Carl Wu

Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center  
Associate Member

University of Washington  
Assistant Professor

### Selected Publications

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## ABSTRACT

**Toshio Tsukiyama** was born in Chiba, a prefecture near Tokyo, Japan, the second of two children. His father began as an engineer in a company that built chemical factories, but he eventually became an executive. His company exported its factories, so Toshio's father travelled outside Japan a great deal. For that reason and because he was, as Toshio describes him, a typical Japanese male, the family did not interact much with him, and he did not discuss his work at home. Toshio's mother was a housewife and the children spent part of each summer visiting grandparents.

Toshio's sister wanted to be a veterinarian and wanted to get away from home, so she enrolled at a vet school on Hokkaido, the northern-most island of Japan, Japan's last frontier. Influenced by her, Toshio also went to Hokkaido, but to a different school, Obihiro University. His sister's college turned out to be better in basic science, and she switched to biochemistry. Again influenced by her, Toshio decided to go into scientific research. Also, one of their aunts was a chemist and an uncle a physicist, so they had been exposed to science for a long time. While in vet school Tsukiyama met the woman who is still his girlfriend; she currently lives in California, and she and Toshio take turns visiting each other.

While at vet school, Toshio read an article he found very interesting, and he decided he wanted to study with its author, Ohtsura Niwa, at Hiroshima University. He met Niwa and persuaded him to accept him as his student. Niwa had obtained his PhD from Stanford University, so he was familiar with the American course of study; he made Toshio read and present books and articles, something the Japanese did not do. He also influenced Toshio to come to the United States for his postdoc, which he did at Whitehead Center for Biomedical Research at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. There he worked on chromatin remodeling in Carl Wu's lab.

The Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, Washington, hired him as an associate member. He also has an affiliate assistant professorship at the University of Washington. He continues his research in molecular biology on the regulation of chromatin structure and its effect on cellular processes. He likes to read, to do outdoor things with his girlfriend (currently gardening), to teach, and to think about—though to leave to others to adapt—the practical or clinical applications of his research. Upon hearing that Toshio was going to the United States to study, a friend told Toshio that he would not come back to Japan, and Toshio is still here.

## UCLA INTERVIEW HISTORY

### INTERVIEWER:

William Van Benschoten, Interviewer, UCLA Oral History Program; B.A., History, University of California, Riverside, 1990; M.A., History, University of California, Riverside, 1991; C.Phil., History, University of California, Los Angeles, 1995.

### SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

**Place:** Tsukiyama's office at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center.

**Dates of sessions:** October 24, 2003; October 27, 2003.

**Total number of recorded hours:** 5

**Persons present during interview:** Tsukiyama 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' 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 Tsukiyama to obtain written background information (curriculum vitae, copies of published articles, etc.) and agree on an interviewing schedule. He also reviewed documentation in Tsukiyama's file at the Pew Scholars Program office in San Francisco, including Tsukiyama's 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.

Tsukiyama did not review the transcript. Therefore, some names remain unverified.

Carol Squires prepared the table of contents and TechniType Transcripts compiled the guide to proper names.

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