CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

JASON D. WEBER

The Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences

Transcript of Interviews
Conducted by

Hilary Domush

at

Washington University in St. Louis
St. Louis, Missouri

on

7 and 8 October 2008
(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

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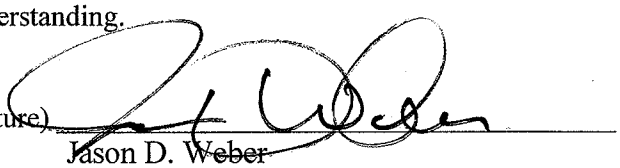
(Signature) 
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JASON D. WEBER

1971 Born in Champaign, Illinois on 28 April

Education

1993 B.S., Bradley University, Biotechnology
1997 Ph.D., St. Louis University, Molecular and Cell Biology

Professional Experience

Monsanto/ G.D. Searle
1993-1994 Research Fellow, Immunoinflammatory Diseases under Dr. Peter C. Isakson

Howard Hughes Medical Institute, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
1997-2000 Postdoctorate, under Dr. Charles J. Sherr

Washington University in St. Louis
2001-2007 Assistant Professor, Cell Biology and Physiology
2007-present Associate Professor, Cell Biology and Physiology

Honors

1993 Monsanto Internship
2001-2004 Edward Mallinckrodt, Jr. Foundation Scholar
2002-2006 Pew Scholar in the Biomedical Sciences
2005-2008 Distinguished Service Teaching Awards
2006 Medical School Teacher of the Month
2008-2012 American Cancer Society Research Scholar
2008-2013 Breast Cancer Research Program Era of Hope Scholar

ABSTRACT

Jason D. Weber grew up in Edwardsville, Illinois, one of two children. His father was an internist; his mother a teacher. As a youngster he liked to read, especially science fiction, to hang around with friends, and to play soccer. He was always interested in science.

Weber entered Bradley University to study biotechnology, a new field that was to become what is now called molecular biology. He discontinued his soccer playing after the first year so that he could concentrate on his studies. In his second year he entered the lab of Samuel Fan, who Weber says was his greatest influence. A radiation biology class led him into the study of cancer and tumor suppression. He also met his future wife while an undergraduate. He loved working in the lab and knew he wanted to do that for his career. Before entering graduate school he spent a year and a half at Monsanto, working on Celebrex® in Peter Isakson's lab. For his PhD he went into St. Louis University's cell and molecular biology program, where Joseph Baldassare became his mentor, working on the cell cycle and publishing five papers in addition to his thesis. At a meeting at Cold Spring Harbor Weber met Charles Sherr and decided he wanted to go to Sherr's lab at St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. There he worked on ARF. His work got him onto the cover of the first issue of *Nature Cell Biology*. Weber began looking for a job, hoping to stay in the Midwest. He accepted an assistant professorship at Washington University in St. Louis's new molecular oncology program, where he is now an associate professor.

At the end of the interview he describes his own start-up package; his style of lab management; his postdocs and students; his publications and grants; the Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences award's timeliness; the Pew meetings; patents; his responsibilities at the university; and science education. He analogizes science to the farm-team system in baseball. He talks a little about his family and how he balances his life with them with his work life. Weber concludes the interview with an explanation of plans for his future work and a commentary on science and scientists in other countries, particularly China and Japan, versus those in the United States.

INTERVIEWER

Hilary Domush earned a B.S. in chemistry from Bates College in Lewiston, Maine in 2003. Since then she has completed a M.S. in chemistry and a M.A. in history of science both from the University of Wisconsin. Her graduate work in the history of science focused on early nineteenth-century chemistry in the city of Edinburgh, while her work in the chemistry was in a total synthesis laboratory. Hilary is currently Program Associate for Oral History at CHF, where she combines these two divergent academic paths. Her current work focuses on the Pew Biomedical Scholars and Women in Chemistry oral history projects. She also contributes to the podcast *Distillations* and the magazine *Chemical Heritage*.

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