

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

PHILLIP D. ZAMORE

Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

Karen A. Frenkel

at

University of Massachusetts Medical School
Worcester, Massachusetts

on

20 and 21 December 2007
(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)



Phillip D. Zamore

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Phillip D. Zamore

1963 Born in Brooklyn, New York on 29 November

Education

1986 A.B., Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Harvard University
1992 Ph.D., Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Harvard University
1992 Advanced *Drosophila* Gene Course, Cold Spring Harbor, New York

Professional Experience

The Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research, Cambridge, Massachusetts

1993-1999 Postdoctoral research with Ruth Lehmann
1998-1999 Postdoctoral research jointly with David P. Bartel
1996-1999 Postdoctoral research jointly with James R. Williamson

University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, Massachusetts

1999-2002 Assistant Professor, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Pharmacology
2002-2005 Associate Professor, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Pharmacology
2004-2005 Associate Professor with tenure, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Pharmacology
2005-present Professor, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Pharmacology
2005-present Gretchen Stone Cook Professor of Biomedical Sciences, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Pharmacology

Honors

2007 RNAi Innovator Award, "RNAi Meeting," Boston, Massachusetts
2002-2007 W.M. Keck Foundation Young Scholar in Medical Research
2000-2004 Pew Scholar in the Biomedical Sciences
1997-1999 Charles H. Hood Postdoctoral Fellowship
1993-2006 Life Sciences Research Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship
1987-1990 National Science Foundation Pre-Doctoral Fellowship

ABSTRACT

Philip D. Zamore's oral history begins with a discussion of his childhood in New York City and Long Island. Explaining his family's emphasis on education and the influence of his father, Zamore detailed his father's illness and death while Zamore attended Harvard University. As an undergraduate at Harvard Zamore developed his interest in science and decided to focus on molecular biology. He spent time in several laboratories including one summer at The Rockefeller University with Sid Strickland and Michael W. Young, though the majority of his laboratory experience was at Massachusetts General Hospital with John H. Hartwig. Staying at Harvard for a semester after graduating to work as a laboratory technician with Michael R. Green, Zamore decided to conduct his graduate research there as well. He moved with Green from Harvard to the University of Massachusetts, Worcester, where his work on snRNP flourished. Subsequently Zamore undertook postdoctoral research with Ruth Lehmann at the Whitehead Institute for Biological Studies at MIT and he collaborated with the laboratories of James R. Williamson and David P. Bartel after Lehmann moved to the Skirball Institute of Biomolecular Medicine at New York University. After his postdoctoral studies, but before moving to his Principal Investigator position at the University of Massachusetts, Zamore began working in the emerging field of RNAi. He detailed his experiences with RNAi and his early work running his own laboratory including the receipt of the Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences Award. Throughout the interview Zamore discussed the importance of writing and publishing and his relationship with his students, as well as balancing his family life with his career. He also compared government funding to private funding, and criticized the U.S. government for not sponsoring riskier science. Zamore explained his experiences in starting the biotech firm Alnylam Pharmaceuticals and concluded his oral history interview with a discussion of trends in biomedical science, RNA research, and globalization.

INTERVIEWER

Karen A. Frenkel is a writer, documentary producer, and author specializing in science and technology and their impacts on society. She wrote *Robots: Machines in Man's Image* (Harmony 1985) with Isaac Asimov. Her articles have appeared in many magazines and newspapers including *The New York Times*, *CyberTimes*, *Business Week*, *Communications Magazine*, *Discover*, *Forbes*, *New Media*, *Personal Computing*, *Scientific American*, *Scientific American MIND*, *The Village Voice*, and *Technology Review*. Ms. Frenkel's award-winning documentary films, *Net Learning* and *Minerva's Machine: Women and Computing* aired on Public Television. She has been an interviewer for Columbia University's Oral History Research Center's 9/11 Narrative and Memory project, The National Press Foundation's Oral History of Women in Journalism, and the International Psychoanalytic Institute for Training and Research's Oral History. Professional memberships include: The Authors Guild, National Association of Science Writers, Writer's Guild of America East, and New York Women in Film and Television: Past Member of the Board and Director of Programming. Her website is www.Karenafrenkel.com.

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