

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Z. HONG ZHOU

The Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

Robin Mejia

at

University of Texas Health Science Center
Houston, Texas

on

16, 17, and 18 May 2006

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

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Kim Phan, Program Intern, Oral History, Chemical Heritage Foundation. B.A. expected 2011, Anthropology, Cornell University.

David J. Caruso, Program Manager, Oral History, Chemical Heritage Foundation. B.A., History of Science, Medicine, and Technology, Johns Hopkins University; PhD., Science and Technology Studies, Cornell University.

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Hong Zhou

Interviewee (Signature)

Z. Hong Zhou, Ph.D., Associate Professor
(Typed Name)

University of Texas, Houston Medical School
6431 Fannin, Rm 2.280MSB, Houston, TX 77030
(Address)

(713) 500-5358
(Phone Number)

z.h.zhou@uth.tmc.edu
(E-mail Address)

May 18, 2006
(Date)

Signed on behalf of the Regents of the University of California:

Teresa Barnett

Head, UCLA Oral History Program

Teresa Barnett
(Typed Name)

(310) 206-2454
(Phone Number)

tbarnett@library.ucla.edu
(E-mail Address)

6/6/06
(Date)

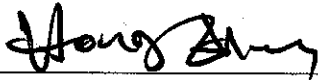
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Z. HONG ZHOU

1965 Born in Hunan Province, China, on 2 March

Education

1986 B.S., Physics (with BS thesis research in chemistry), University of Science and Technology of China
1989 M.S., Physics, University of Science and Technology of China
1995 Ph.D., Biochemistry, Baylor College of Medicine

Professional Experience

1995-1997 University of Houston, Houston, Texas
NLM/NIH sponsored postdoctoral trainee in high performance computing, Department of Mathematics and Department of Computer Sciences

1997-2001 University of Texas Health Science Center, Houston, Texas
Assistant Professor, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine

1997-present Faculty Member, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Virology and Gene Therapy, and Molecular Pathology, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

1999-2001 Assistant Professor, Department of Health Informatics, School of Health Information Sciences

2001-present Adjunct Associate, Department of Health Informatics, School of Health Information Sciences

2001-present Associate Professor (with tenure) Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine

1998-present W. M. Keck Center for Computational Biology
Faculty member

1998-present Houston-Area Molecular Biophysics Program (supported by NIH)
Faculty member

2000-present Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas
Adjunct Associate Professor, Structural and Computational Biology and Molecular Biophysics Program

Honors

1991-1995	Numerous oral and poster presentation awards as trainees
1992-1995	W.M. Keck pre-doctoral fellow in computational biology
1995	Best Ph.D. Dissertation Award, Rice University/University of Texas Medical Center Sigma Xi Society
1995-1997	NLM/NIH-sponsored postdoctoral trainee
1999-2003	Pew Scholar in the Biomedical Sciences
2000	Basil O'Connor Scholar Award of the March of Dimes Foundation
2002	Established Investigator Award from the American Heart Institute
2004	Burton Award from the American Microscopy Society

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ASBTRACT

Z. Hong Zhou was born in Hunan Province in China the year before the Cultural Revolution, the eldest of three siblings. His father was a factory worker who was home only one day a week; his mother a housewife who cared for her children. Though in school, Zhou felt as if he had little to no education prior to middle school, since the first few years of the Revolution were spent trying to organize an educational system (Zhou's first-grade teacher held class in an abandoned building found in the area). At the end of the Cultural Revolution, though, China committed itself to science and Zhou's father, in response, spent a month's salary on buying a set of science books for Zhou to encourage his education. At the age of fourteen Zhou went off to high school at a boarding school a distance away from his village, not returning to see his home for over a year.

Zhou did well on his college entrance exams and, with an intense interest in high-energy physics, he applied to and was accepted at the University of Science and Technology of China in Hefei. Ultimately he received a master's degree under Lienchao Tsien conducting research using cyclotron radiation imaging, also intending to pursue a doctoral degree abroad. He started his graduate education at New York University but then moved on to the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, working in Wah Chiu's laboratory—his doctoral thesis focused on imaging the herpes virus. After meeting L. Ridgway Scott, Zhong decided to undertake a postdoctoral fellowship as a National Library of Medicine/National Institutes of Health-sponsored trainee in the Departments of Mathematics and of Computer Sciences at the University of Houston under Scott developing computational biology methods. From there he accepted a position at the University of Texas Medical Center studying viruses using structural and computational biology.

At the end of the interview Zhong talks about balancing his family life and his career; the impact of the Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences on his work; his lab management style; and the practical applications of his research. He also discusses his collaboration with industry; his future research developing the technology of imaging while studying viral cell interactions; and the process of conducting scientific research before speaking more about the role of the Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences in his research.

UCLA INTERVIEW HISTORY

INTERVIEWER:

Robin Mejia, Interviewer, UCLA Oral History Program; B.A., Biology, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1997

TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

Place: Zhou's office at the University of Texas Health Science Center

Dates: May 16, 17, and 18, 2006.

Total number of recorded hours: approximately 4.5 hours

Persons present during interview: Mejia and Zhou

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, Mejia corresponded with Zhou by email and talked by phone to obtain background material, including Zhou's CV, and to schedule the interview. Mejia also obtained and read copies of Zhou's published articles, reviewed descriptions of his work on his website, and reviewed background information on the institutions at which he has worked and the countries in which he has lived.

ORIGINAL EDITING

Carol Squires edited the interview. She edited for punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling, and verified proper names. Words and phrases added by the editor have been bracketed.

Zhou did not review the transcript. Consequently, some proper names and other information remain unverified.

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