

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

**ATHAN KULIOPULOS**

The Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences

Transcript of an Interview  
Conducted by

William Van Benschoten

at

Tufts University  
Boston, Massachusetts

on

2, 3 and 4 December 2002

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

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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**REFORMATTING:**

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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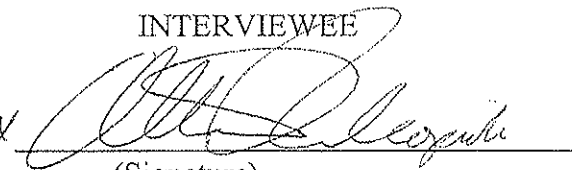
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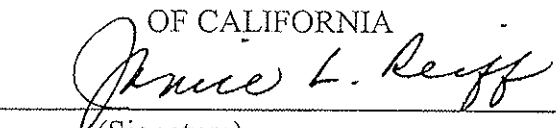
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Department of Medicine and  
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Division of Hematology-Oncology  
New England Medical Center  
750 Washington Street, Box 8486  
Boston, MA 02111

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INTERVIEWEE  
  
(Signature)

THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY  
OF CALIFORNIA  
  
(Signature)

Athan Kuliopulos  
(Typed Name)

Janice L. Reiff  
(Typed Name)

Department of Medicine and Biochemistry  
(Address)

Interim Director, Oral History Program  
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\_\_\_\_\_

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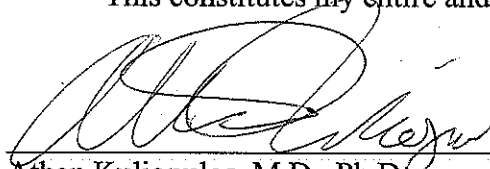
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## ATHAN KULIOPULOS

1961 Born in Lynn, Massachusetts, on 6 October

### Education

1983 B.S., Biology, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
1989 Ph.D., Biochemistry, Cellular, and Molecular Biology, Johns Hopkins  
Medical School  
1989 M.D., Medical Scientist Training Program at Johns Hopkins Medical  
School

### Professional Experience

1989-1990 Johns Hopkins Medical School  
Postdoctoral Training

1990-1994 Harvard Medical School  
Postdoctoral Training

Tufts University

1994-2002 Assistant Professor of Medicine  
1994-2002 Assistant Professor of Biochemistry  
1995-present Sackler School of Biomedical Sciences  
2002-present Associate Professor of Medicine  
2002-present Associate Professor of Biochemistry  
2002-present Associate Professor of Genetics

### Honors

1983 *magna cum laude*, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
1983-1989 Trainee of the Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP),  
National Institutes of Health  
1989 Paul Ehrlich Award for Basic Science Research, Johns Hopkins  
Medical School  
1991-1993 Judith Graham Pool Postdoctoral Fellowship, National Hemophilia  
Foundation  
1993-1994 NRSA, National Institutes of Health  
1996-1998 American Society of Hematology Scholar Award  
1996-2000 Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences Grant



1998-1999	GRASP Award, National Institutes of Health
2000-2001	New England Medical Center Research Fund Award
2001-2003	Cancer Center Research Award, New England Medical Center

### Selected Publications

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## ABSTRACT

**Athan Kuliopulos** was raised in North Reading, a suburb of Boston, Massachusetts, the middle child of three siblings in a close-knit Greek family. His mother worked as a secretary prior to having children, and then began doing so again once her kids were a older; his father received his undergraduate degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and his master's degree in electrical engineering from Boston University before working for Bell Laboratories. From an early age Kuliopulos was interested in all aspects of nature—entomology, geology, and meteorology—in the Boy Scouts, in stamp collecting, and playing with his friends and siblings. He enjoyed reading and science in school, working as a science-assistant while in junior high and spending time trying to make gunpowder as a chemistry experiment. In high school, Kuliopulos's biology teacher, Robert Gross, encouraged him to pursue independent biological research for a science fair project—Kuliopulos chose to study bacterial growth and natural products that inhibit such growth.

He matriculated at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, where in his sophomore year he had his first publication with Charles W. Boylen (a map of bathymetry of Lake George). After taking James K. Coward's biochemistry course, Kuliopulos then began work in Coward's laboratory studying enzyme kinetics. From Rensselaer he went on to the MD/PhD program at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, where he undertook doctoral research on ketosteroid isomerase in Albert S. Mildvan and Paul Talalay's laboratories (he also worked with David Shortle). After Hopkins, he moved into a postdoctoral position researching vitamin K carboxylase in Christopher T. Walsh's laboratory at MIT, and subsequently decided to study G-protein coupled receptors. He met and married his wife and then accepted a position at Tufts University-New England Medical Center, where he has focused his research on protease activated receptors and peptidins involved in blood coagulation and cell signaling.

The interview ends with Kuliopulos's thoughts on his clinical trial collaborations with industry; the process of writing journal articles; balancing family and career; the issue of patents; and the pros and cons of privatization of research. He also reflects on ethical questions in science; his course in the history of medicine during medical school; setting the national science agenda; the role of the scientist in setting public policy; and the role of the Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences in his work.

## 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:** Kuliopulos' office, Tufts University.

**Dates, length of sessions:** December 2, 2002; December 3, 2002; December 4, 2002

**Total number of recorded hours:** 6.0

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

Kuliopulos reviewed the transcript. He verified proper names and made a number of corrections and additions.

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

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