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BRIAN D. DYNLACHT

The Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

William Van Benschoten

at

New York University
New York City, New York

on

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BRIAN D. DYNLACHT

1965 Born in Brooklyn, New York, on 3 September

Education

1987 B.S., summa cum laude, Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry, Yale University

1992 Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley

Professional Experience

University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, California

1992-1993 Postdoctorate

Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts

1993-1995 Postdoctorate

Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

1995-1999 Assistant Professor, Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology

1999-2002 Associate Professor, Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology

New York University School of Medicine, New York City, New York

2002-present Associate Professor, Department of Pathology

2002-present Director of the NYU School of Medicine Genomics Program

Honors

1987 Summa cum Laude and Distinction in the Major of Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry, Yale University

1992 Oncogene Science Award for Outstanding Research in Gene Transcription

1993 Ph.D. thesis selected to represent the University of California, Berkeley in the University Microfilms International Distinguished Dissertation Award Competition

1993-1995 Damon Runyon-Walter Winchell Cancer Fund Fellow

1994-present Reviewer for the journals *Cell*, *Molecular Cell*, *Cancer Cell*, *EMBO Journal*, *Genes and Development*, *Genomics*, *Journal*

	of Cell Biology, J. Cell Sci., Mol. Cell. Biol., Mol. Biol. Cell, Nature, Nature Genetics, Nature Medicine, Nature Methods, Nature Reviews Cancer, Nature Reviews Molecular Cell Biology, Oncogene, Proceedings of the Natl. Acad. Sci., and *Science*
1996	Ad hoc reviewer: Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Award study section
1996-1997	Damon Runyon Scholar Award
1998-1999	Reviewer for the Israel Science Foundation; Textbook reviewer for Harcourt/Academic Press.
1998-2000	Chairman, Graduate Admissions Committee for Dept. of MCB, Harvard
1998-2002	Pew Scholar in the Biomedical Sciences
1999	Junior Faculty Search Committee, Dept. of MCB.
1999	Scientific Program reviewer, Wellcome/CRC Institute, University of Cambridge, England and for the Association for International Cancer Research (United Kingdom).
1999	Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE)
2000-2002	Instructor, Gene Expression course, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory
2000-2004	Ad hoc reviewer: NIH CDF-1 (formerly Mol. Biol.) and NHLBI study sections
2003	Ad hoc reviewer, NIH, Special Emphasis panel (ZRG1)
2003	Chair, Bioinformatics and Genomics Search Committee
2004-present	Member, NIH CDF-1 (currently MGB) study section
2004-present	Editorial Board, Cell Death and Differentiation
2005	Irma T. Hirschl Career Scientist Award

Selected Publications

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W. Tsang, A. Spektor, V. Indjeian, J. Salisbury, Z. Chen, D. Luciano, I. Sanchez, and B. D. Dynlacht (2005). CP110 controls a switch that regulates centrosome duplication and genome stability. In preparation.

ABSTRACT

Brian D. Dynlacht spent much of his youth in Coral Gables, Florida, one of three children. From his youth Dynlacht was impressed by his father, a man who suffered through the Holocaust as a child and survived through the kindness of Polish woman who hid Dynlacht's father from the Gestapo, and by his mother who raised her children while Dylnlacht's father traveled for work. He was fortunate to have several encouraging high school teachers who allowed him to broaden his intellectual interests; an experience in an organic chemistry lab as a high school senior kindled his enthusiasm for science.

Dynlacht chose to attend Yale University for his undergraduate studies; the academic environment at Yale as well as his work in Paul Howard-Flanders's laboratory, further reinforced that he had a real passion for scientific research—specifically molecular biophysics and biochemistry. After completing his undergraduate degree, he moved on to the University of California, Berkeley for his Ph.D.; in Robert Tjian's laboratory, Dynlacht researched transcription factors. After his graduate career, he decided to pursue research on gene regulation and cell-growth regulatory networks in a postdoctoral position at Massachusetts General Hospital with Edward Harlow. While he hoped to return to Berkeley as a professor, he ultimately accepted a faculty position at Harvard University, where his research continued on gene regulation and cell-growth regulatory networks.

After several years, Dynlacht, realizing that New York was a better fit in terms of location, took a faculty position at New York University, specifically at the NYU Cancer Institute. In addition to heading his own lab, he became responsible for overseeing NYU's genomics facility in the Rusk Institute. While his benchwork time has decreased, other tasks, including overseeing his laboratory, writing grants, writing journal articles, reviewing papers, travelling, and, to a lesser degree, teaching, have come to occupy a significant part of his time as a principal investigator.

The interview concludes with Dynlacht's reflections on how his laboratory and research have evolved in the past few years, and how these things might—and should—change in the next five to ten years. Additionally, he talks about broader scientific issues, including the complicated relationship between academic and industrial science, as well as the pros and cons of advanced technology in scientific research. He also expresses his opinions about national scientific policy and how scientists should be—but have not been—included in the discussion of public policy questions. The interview ends with a discussion of how women and ethnic minorities are represented in science, both broadly and at his own institution, as well as the impact that the Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences has had on his work.

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.

TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

Place: Dynlacht's office at New York University.

Dates of sessions: August 19 2004; August 20, 2004.

Total number of recorded hours: 5.0

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

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

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

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