

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

KEVAN M. SHOKAT

The Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

William Van Benschoten

at

University of California, San Francisco
San Francisco, California

on

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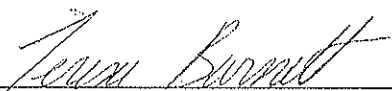
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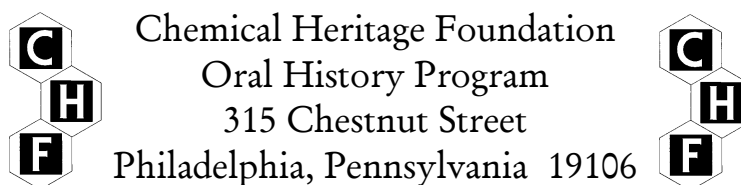
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KEVAN M. SHOKAT

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Education

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1991 Ph.D., Chemistry, University of California, Berkeley, California

Professional Experience

1992-1994 Stanford University
Postdoctoral Fellow

1994-1998 Princeton University
Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry and
Molecular Biology

1998-1999 Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry and
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1999-present University of California, Berkeley
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Associate Professor, Department of Cellular and
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Honors

1986 Phi Beta Kappa, Reed College
1986-1987 UC Berkeley Regents Fellowship
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1997-2000	Cottrell Scholar
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1999-2001	Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellow
2001	Protein Society Young Investigator
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Selected Publications

- Van Keymeulen, A., Wong, K., Knight, Z.A., Govaerts, C., Hahn, K.M., Shokat, K.M. and Bourne, H.R. (2006) To stabilize neutrophil polarity, PIP3 and Cdc42 augment RhoA activity at the back as well as signals at the front. *J Cell Biol.* (Epub ahead of print)
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ABSTRACT

Kevan M. Shokat was born in Boulder City, Nevada, but raised (mostly) in the San Francisco Bay Area in Albany, California (except for a year in Iran), the older—by twelve years—of two brothers. His parents were both active politically, participating in anti-war movements and in anti-shah movements during the 1970s that culminated in the Iranian Revolution of 1979; they started their own copying and commercial printing business, but after some time moved into print brokering, his mother taking a position at Charles Schwab. As a child Shokat enjoyed playing sports, especially baseball and track; he excelled in high school and worked with his parents in the family business.

While his high school was vocationally-minded, a guidance counselor suggested that Shokat apply to Reed College in Portland, Oregon, which he did and subsequently attended. He majored in chemistry and enjoyed lectures offered by Thomas G. Dunne, Phyllis Cozen, and Nick G. Galaktos; he completed his thesis with Ronald W. McClard on phosphorous chemistry, making inhibitors of enzymes, and doing enzyme kinetics and nucleotide metabolism. He was unsure of the kind of graduate program that he wanted to attend so he sent applications both to PhD programs and MD/PhD programs, settling on pursuing his PhD at the University of California, Berkeley. At Berkeley he worked with Peter G. Schultz in biological chemistry in antibody catalysis, and from there went on to a postdoctoral fellowship in immunology with Christopher C. Goodnow at Stanford University. He then accepted a position at Princeton University, during which time he received the Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences award and he worked on biochemistry and immunology research in kinase-mediated cell signaling pathways. He left Princeton for a position at the University of California, San Francisco, undertaking chemical genetic research on kinases and their substrates.

At the end of the interview Shokat talks about his future research on chemical genetics and protein kinases in cell signaling pathways; the practical applications of his research; collaboration and competition in science; and his laboratory management style. He also discusses the process of writing journal articles; the issue of patents; the national scientific agenda; the grant-writing process; the privatization of scientific research; educating the public about science; and the importance of students and family in doing science.

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: Shokat's office, University of California, San Francisco.

Dates, length of sessions: January 24, 2005; January 25, 2005; and January 26, 2005.

Total number of recorded hours: 5.0

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

Shokat did not review the transcript, and therefore some names remain unverified.

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

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