

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

CHARLES M. RICE

The Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

Robert Kohler and Richard Sawyer

at

Washington University Medical Center
St. Louis, Missouri

on

7 May 1990

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This oral history is part of a series supported by a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts based on the Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences. This collection is an important resource for the history of biomedicine, recording the life and careers of young, distinguished biomedical scientists and of Pew Biomedical Scholar Advisory Committee members.



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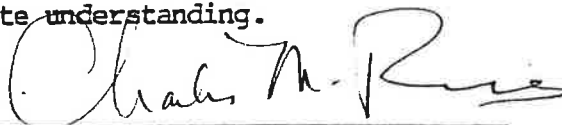
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CHARLES M. RICE

1952 Born in Sacramento, California on 25 August

Education

1974 B.S., Zoology, University of California, Davis
1981 Ph.D., Biochemistry, California Institute of Technology

Professional Experience

1981-1984 California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA
Post-Doctorate, Virology

1985 Australian National University, Canberra, Australia
Visiting Fellow, Biochemistry

1986-present Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, MO
Assistant Professor, Microbiology & Immunology

Honors

1975-1977 California State Scholarship
1975-1979 Earle C. Anthony Fellowship
1975-1980 Graduate Research Assistantship, California Institute of Technology
1979 National Institutes of Health Predoctoral Traineeship
1980-1981 California Institute of Technology Fellowship
1981-1982 Gosney Research Fellowship
1986 Pew Scholars Award

ABSTRACT

Charles Rice grew up in California. His father was an insurance adjuster and his mother a housewife. He intended to be veterinarian, so he entered University of California, Davis where he majored in zoology while there he worked for Dennis Barrett and spent summers at Woods Hole Marine Biology Laboratory. He loved Spanish language and literature; after graduation he traveled in Latin America before he returned to be a teaching assistant for the Physiology Course at Woods Hole.

For graduate school Rice decided on the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), where he worked in James Strauss' lab on RNA viruses. He continued in that lab as a postdoc, collaborating with Henry Huang on Sindbis virus and beginning to work on the yellow fever virus vaccine strain.

After a mini sabbatical with Lynn Dalgarno in Australia, Rice accepted a position at Washington University in St. Louis. There he continued to collaborate with Henry Huang and Sondra Schlesinger. He had fewer administrative duties than at other institutions; and a broader swath of science and scientists. He feels he is still learning how to manage his lab, but hopes to develop his students into independent and creative thinkers. His lab continues his work in RNA viruses and has recently begun work on hepatitis C. Rice's overall objective is to learn how to inhibit virus replication without harming the hosts.

Rice discusses the influence of Caltech. He explains his lab composition, his management style, and how his collaborations enriched his science. He loves bench work but is not so fond of administrative duties. He does not like fashionable science or having to spend so much time seeking grants and believes that the current discouraging state of funding agencies is turning away good people. He stresses importance of basic science. He may work more intensively on hepatitis C and thinks Sindbis has other uses as model system.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Early Years | 1 |
| Grew up in California. Planned to become veterinarian. | |
| College Years | 4 |
| Entered University of California, Davis, majored in zoology. Biology class with Dennis Barrett. Summers at Woods Hole Marine Biology Laboratory. Experiences in Latin America after graduation. Teaching assistant at Woods Hole. | |
| Graduate School and Postdoctoral Work | 8 |
| Entered James Strauss' lab at California Institute of Technology. Thesis work on virion envelope proteins. Continued postdoctoral work in Strauss' lab. Collaborated with Henry Huang on Sindbis virus and sequenced yellow fever virus as model system for other flaviviruses. Australia sabbatical. | |
| First Independent Lab | 22 |
| Accepted position at Washington University in St. Louis. Lab management. Day to day activity. Hepatitis C research. | |
| General Thoughts | 30 |
| Loves bench work. Lab administration and teaching. Future plans. | |
| Index | 36 |

INDEX

- A**
- Ackers, Gary, 6
Argentina, 10, 11
Arias, Carlos F., 3
Asai, David J., 22
Australia, 22, 23
- B**
- Baltimore, David, 14
Barciale, Thomas J., 25
Barrett, Dennis P., 4, 5, 6, 8, 9
Beadle, George W., 20
Bogotá, Colombia, 10
Boulder, Colorado, 22
Bridges, Calvin B., 20
Butler, Eugene T., 13
- C**
- California, 1, 11
California Institute of Technology, 3, 7, 9, 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24
Caltech. *See* California Institute of Technology
Cebra, John J., 6
Central America, 3, 9, 10
Chico, California, 1
collaboration, 24, 25
Colombia, 10
Colorado Springs, Colorado, 1
Columbia University, 20
competititon, 25
Costantini, Franklin P., 22
Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico, 3
- D**
- Dalgarno, Lynn, 23
Davidson, Eric H., 7, 9
Davidson, Norman R., 20
Davie, Joseph M., 24
Davis, Mark M., 22
Davis, Ronald W., 13
- DNA, 13, 16, 17, 18, 30
cDNA, 13, 14, 15, 16, 30, 32
- F**
- Frelinger, John, 22
Fresno, California, 10
- G**
- grants/funding, 23, 33, 35, 36
Gutierrez-Hartmann, Arthur, 3
- H**
- Han, Chang S., 26
Harvard University, 22
HIV. *See* virus:human immunodeficiency virus
Hogness, David S., 21
Huang, Henry V., 14, 21
- K**
- Kornberg, Arthur, 18
- L**
- Lewis, Edward B., 21
Little, Peter, 13
Lopez, Susanna, 3
- M**
- Maniatis, Thomas P., 13, 22
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 25
McMahon, Daniel S., 22
Mexico, 3
Miami, Florida, 10
Mitchell, Herschel K., 21
Morgan, Thomas H., 19, 20, 22
- N**
- Neurospora*, 21
Normark, Staffan J., 24

O

Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, 3
Owen, Ray D., 21

P

Pauling, Linus, 19
PCR. *See* polymerase chain reaction
Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences,
3, 22
polymerase chain reaction, 30
Pomona College, 1

R

Racaniello, Vincent R., 14
RNA, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 30, 31, 36

S

Sacramento, California, 1
Schultz, Jack C., 20
Seed, Brian, 22
South America, 3, 9, 10, 11, 23
Stanford University, 13
Strauss, James S., 3, 11, 12, 19, 23
Sturtevant, Alfred H., 20
Svedberg, Theodor, 8

U

UCSD. *See* University of California, San Diego
United States of America, 3, 10

University of California, Davis, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8
University of California, San Diego, 9
University of Connecticut, 6
University of Pennsylvania, 6

V

virus, 3, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 25, 26, 30, 31, 32, 35,
36
 alphavirus family, 15
 flavivirus family, 15, 23, 31, 36
 hepatitis A, 31
 hepatitis C, 31
 herpes, 31
 human immunodeficiency virus, 31, 35
 sindbis, 14, 15, 16, 24, 25, 36
 Togavirus family, 15
 vaccinia virus, 3, 14
 yellow fever, 3, 15, 16, 23, 30, 31, 32
 Asibi, 15, 16

W

Wash U. *See* Washington University in St. Louis
Washington University in St. Louis, 17, 22, 23
Weissman, Charles, 14
Wood, William B., 22
Woods Hole, Massachusetts, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11
Worcester, Massachusetts, 1

Y

Yphantis, David, 6