CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

MARK B. VAN DOREN

Pew Scholars in the Biomedical Sciences

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

David J. Caruso

at

Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, Maryland

on

26 and 27 November 2007
(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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MARK B. VAN DOREN

1965	Born in Syracuse, New York on 3 September

Education

1983-1987	Cornell University, B.A. with distinction, Biology
1989-1994	University of California, San Diego, Ph.D., Biology

Professional Experience

	Oncogene Science, Manhasset, New York
1987-1989	Research Technician
	Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research, Cambridge, Massachusetts,
1994-1996	Post-doctoral Fellowship, Dr. Ruth Lehmann
	Skirball Institute for Biomolecular Medicine, New York, New York
1996-1999	Post-doctoral Fellowship, Dr. Ruth Lehmann
	Johns Hopkins University
1999-2006	Assistant Professor, Department of Biology
2006-present	Associate Professor, Department of Biology
2006-present	Co-Director, Graduate Program in Cellular, Molecular and Developmental Biology and Biophysics

Honors

1992	Society for Developmental Biology Award for Achievement in Embryology
1994	Howard Hughes Medical Institute Research Associate
1995	Finalist, Larry Sandler Award (International competition for thesis work in *Drosophila*)
1995-1997	American Cancer Society Postdoctoral Fellowship
1998	Howard Hughes Medical Institute Research Associate
2000-2004	Pew Scholars Award

ABSTRACT

Mark D. Van Doren was born and raised in upstate New York with his three siblings. Although Van Doren's father was a physician, he did not discuss medicine or science at home much; Van Doren's interest in biology developed mainly during the course of his high school science classes. He undertook summer research in photoporphyrin derivatives at Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York in an attempt to further this interest in biology.

After matriculating at Cornell University—a family tradition—Van Doren began research with Efraim Racker in the field of bioenergetics. While working with Racker, Van Doren was exposed to some of the complexities of scientific practice, including research ethics and the need for experimental replication and validation. During his time at Cornell, he was able to publish a paper in a scientific journal, an experience that helped him decide upon laboratory science as his career. After graduating from Cornell, Van Doren worked at Oncogene Science prior to starting graduate work at the University of California, San Diego.

While doing a rotation in James W. Posakony's laboratory, Van Doren developed an interest in *Drosophila*; he then decided to pursue research on the biochemistry of *Drosophila* BHLH proteins for his degree, which quickly resulted in a 1991 *Development* paper. In an effort to expand his interest in and knowledge of relevant science early in his graduate career, Van Doren studied at the Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory taking a course on embryology. He did his postdoctoral research with Ruth Lehmann, first at the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research and then at the Skirball Institute for Biomolecular Medicine. In the Lehmann laboratory, Van Doren began his work on *Drosophila* germ cells that had first peaked his interest at Woods Hole. His HMG-CoA reductase work led to a 1998 *Nature* publication.

Upon completing his post-doctoral research, Van Doren accepted a position at Johns Hopkins University where he has continued his *Drosophila* research. He received the Pew Scholars in the Biomedical Sciences award shortly after starting as a principal investigator, an award that provided him validation as a young researcher. Throughout the interview Van Doren discussed his current research, the challenges of running a laboratory, and funding.

INTERVIEWER

David J. Caruso earned a B.A. in the History of Science, Medicine, and Technology from the Johns Hopkins University in 2001 and a Ph.D. in Science and Technology Studies from Cornell University in 2008. His graduate work focused on the interaction of American military and medical personnel from the Spanish-American War through World War I and the institutional transformations that resulted in the development of American military medicine as a unique form of knowledge and practice. David is currently the Program Manager for Oral History at the CHF. His current research interest focuses on the discipline formation of biomedical science in 20th-century America and the organizational structures that have contributed to such formation.

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