

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

ROBERTA A. SANCHEZ GOTTLIEB

The Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

William Van Benschoten

at

Scripps Research Institute
La Jolla, California
on

10 and 13 October 2003

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



Roberta A. Sanchez Gottlieb

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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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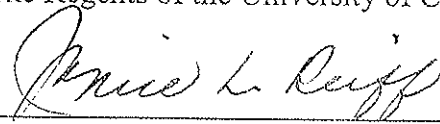
Hematology
Scripps Research Institute, Division of ~~Biochemistry~~, Molecular and
Experimental Medicine
10550 North Torrey Pines Road
(Address)

858.784.9165
(Phone Number)

robbieg@scripps.edu
(E-mail Address)

X 28 October 2003
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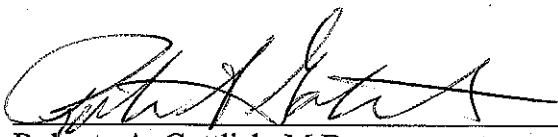
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ROBERTA A. GOTTLIEB

1958 Born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on 15 February

Education

1980 B.A., Johns Hopkins University
1984 M.D., Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

Professional Experience

1990-1992 University of California, San Diego, School of Medicine
Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Pharmacology
1997-present Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine

1993-1994 The Scripps Research Institute, Division of Biochemistry
Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Molecular and
Experimental Medicine
1994-1995 Senior Research Associate, Department of Molecular and
Experimental Medicine
1995-1996 Assistant Member, Department of Molecular and
Experimental Medicine
1997-1998 Associate Member, Department of Molecular and
Experimental Medicine
1999-present Associate Professor, Department of Molecular and
Experimental Medicine

1994-present Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, San Diego
Research Biochemist

Honors

1990 Fellowship, Cancer Research Foundation of America
1991-1993 Howard Hughes Medical Institute Physician Postdoctoral Fellowship
1994-1995 American Heart Association Minority Scientist Development Award
1996-1998 National Institutes of Health Clinical Investigator Award
1997-1999 American Society for Hematology Junior Faculty Scholar Award
1997-2001 Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences Grant

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ABSTRACT

Roberta A. Sanchez Gottlieb grew up on a cattle ranch about eighty miles from Albuquerque, New Mexico, the youngest of three sisters, though, given the disparity in ages (five and six years older), she felt like she was raised as an only child, receiving so much attention from her parents. Her father was a uranium miner before becoming a rancher; her mother a schoolteacher before having children (becoming a substitute teacher thereafter). She was heavily influenced by her parents who valued education and curiosity, and had several influential teachers in school who contributed to her intellectual development. The family's religion also played an important role in her life.

After graduating from high school as valedictorian, Gottlieb matriculated at Bryn Mawr College. Almost immediately upon entering, however, she decided that she wanted to undertake more rigorous scientific research and so she transferred (after one semester) to Johns Hopkins University. Baltimore also provided her the opportunity to continue her study of music at the Peabody Institute with Walter Hautzig. While an undergraduate Gottlieb undertook biophysical research with Michael Beers, focusing on electron microscopy. Based on this experience she developed an interest in microtubule assembly, leading her to work with Douglas B. Murphy during her junior year. Though music was certainly a profound part of Gottlieb's life, she decided to attend the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine for her medical degree, conducting research on the MAP-2 protein.

Marrying during medical school presented Gottlieb with the "two-body problem" for her residency (her husband was also a physician). They chose the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, where she completed a residency in pediatrics and a hematology-oncology fellowship under William J. Lennarz and Eugenie S. Kleinerman on immune response and protein kinase C inhibition; she also worked with Steven Buescher on neutrophils in the department of infectious diseases. After residency Gottlieb began a postdoctoral position with Michael Karin in molecular biology at the University of California, San Diego and subsequently took another postdoctorate with Bernard M. Babor, where she was able to indulge her interest in apoptosis. She then moved on to a position at the Scripps Research Institute.

The interview ends with Gottlieb's thoughts on the broader applications of her work; creativity in science; her future research in myocardial ischemia; the issue of patents and the privatization of research; the role of the scientist in public policy and education; gender issues in science; and balancing family life with work. She concludes the interview by elaborating on the impact of the Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences for her work and improving the quality of 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: Gottlieb's office.

Dates, length of sessions: October 10, 2003 and October 13, 2003.

Total number of recorded hours: 4.0

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

Gottlieb reviewed the transcript. She verified proper names and made minor corrections and additions.

Carol Squires prepared the table of contents. Mark Villegas prepared the guide to proper names.

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