CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

MARKUS STOFFEL

The Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

Andrea R. Maestrejuan

at

Rockefeller University
New York, New York

on

14, 15 and 16 October 2002

Markus Stoffel

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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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

Oral History Interview Agreement No. R110502G

This Interview Agreement is made and entered into this 5 day of November, 2002 by and between THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, a California corporation, on behalf of the Oral History Program at the UCLA campus, hereinafter called "University," and MARKUS STOFFEL, having an address at Laboratory of Metabolic Diseases, Rockefeller University, 1230 York Avenue, New York, New York 10021-6399, hereinafter called "Interviewee."

Interviewee agrees to participate in a series of University-conducted tape-recorded interviews, commencing on or about October 14, 2002, and tentatively entitled "Interview with Markus Stoffel. This Agreement relates to any and all materials originating from the interviews, namely the tape recordings of the interviews and a written manuscript prepared from the tapes, hereinafter collectively called "the Work."

In consideration of the mutual covenants, conditions, and terms set forth below, the parties hereto hereby agree as follows:

1. Interviewee irrevocably assigns to University all his copyright, title and interest in and to the Work. This assignment applies to University, its successors, and assigns, for and during the existence of the copyright and all renewals and extensions thereof.

2. By virtue of this assignment, University will have the right to use the Work for any research, educational, or other purpose, including electronic reproduction, that University may deem appropriate.

3. Interviewee acknowledges that he will receive no remuneration or compensation for his participation in the interviews or for the rights assigned hereunder.

4. Interviewee will receive from University, free of charge, one bound copy of the typewritten manuscript of the interviews.

5. To insure against substantive error or misquotation, Interviewee will have the right to review the manuscript before it is put into final form. University therefore will send Interviewee a copy of the edited transcript for review and comment. Interviewee will return transcript and comments to University within 30 days of receipt of the transcript. In the event that Interviewee does not respond within 30 days, University will assume that Interviewee has given full approval of the transcript.

6. All notices and other official correspondence concerning this Agreement will be sent to the following:

If to University:

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If to Interviewee:

Markus Stoffel
Laboratory of Metabolic Diseases
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1230 York Avenue
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University and Interviewee have executed this Agreement on the date first written above.

INTERVIEWEE

M. Stoffel
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Markus Stoffel
(Typed Name)

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Date 10/14/2002

THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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MARKUS STOFFEL

1962 Born in Cologne, Germany, on 13 March

Education

1982 Arbitur, Gymnasium Kreuzgasse, Cologne, Germany
1987 B.A., Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge University, England
1987 M.A., Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge University, England
1991 MD/PhD, Friedrich-Wilhelms University, Bonn, Germany

Professional Experience

Heinrich Pette Institute, Hamburg, Germany
1989-1991 Molecular Biology

Hamburg University Medical Center, Hamburg, Germany
1989-1991 Internal Medicine/Endocrinology

The Rockefeller University
1995-present Assistant Professor, Head of Laboratory

The University of Chicago Medical Center, Howard Hughes Medical Institute
1993-1994 Research Associate/Assistant Professor
1991-1993 Postdoctoral Fellow
1991-1994 Molecular Genetics

Honors

1987 Dr. Graham P. McCullagh Memorial Prize, Cambridge, England
1989 Postdoctoral Fellowship Award from the Deutsche Margarineumion
1991 Postdoctoral Fellowship Award from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft
1996 Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences

Selected Publications

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ABSTRACT

Markus Stoffel was born and raised in Cologne, Germany, the second youngest of four siblings. His father was a professor and the chairman of the Department of Biochemistry of the Universität zu Köln in Cologne; his mother received a degree in sociology while in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. His family was very close and enjoyed reading, music, theater, and other facets of an intellectual and cultural life, often hosting scientists and other academics at their home. Stoffel received the standard *Gymnasium* education (about which he spoke at length), was interested in science from an early age, and had the opportunity to spend a high school year abroad in Cambridge, England—where he was struck by the specialization of the educational system and the teaching—which proved quite formative.

After deciding on a career in science/medicine, Stoffel began his studies at Rheinische Friedrich-Willhelms-Universität in Bonn, Germany, but he was drawn back to England, specifically Cambridge University, for three years (two years of coursework and a year of laboratory research under Anthony Minson), before returning to Bonn, Germany for his clinical training. He encountered many influential and high-profile scientists while at Cambridge, which is also where he learned genetic research while working on cytomegalovirus at the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute under Anthony Minson and Geoffrey L. Smith. After receiving his degree in Bonn, Stoffel took an internship position at the University of Hamburg in Germany before taking another at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in New York. After his two internships, a budding interest in the growing research regarding the genetics of diabetes, and a recommendation from a family friend, Purnell W. Choppin, Stoffel applied to the University of Chicago, where he received a position and worked under Graeme I. Bell on candidate genes involved in diabetes. Upon finishing his postdoctoral research, he accepted a position at the Rockefeller University, continuing work on the chromosome 20 project he had begun while in Bell's lab and also looking at the genes and transcription factors involved in the pathogenesis of type 2 diabetes.

At the end of the interview, Stoffel details his current research as well as what paths his research may take in the future, including large-scale genetic studies on diabetes in the island population of Kosrae and research on development and differentiation in the pancreatic beta cell. He also discusses broader issues of science, including: collaboration and competition in his research area; the grant-writing process; and funding systems in both the United States and Europe. Stoffel talks in depth about his position at the Rockefeller University, his teaching responsibilities, and his patents; he additionally discusses how this work life is balanced with his family life. After making more comparisons between scientific ethical issues in the United States and Europe, he expands on that idea and talks about the ethical issues of gene therapy and stem cell research. He concludes the interview by relating his professional and personal goals and noting the impact of the Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences on his work.

UCLA INTERVIEW HISTORY

INTERVIEWER:

Andrea R. Maestrejuan, Interviewer, UCLA Oral History Program. B.S., Biological Sciences, University of California, Irvine; M.A., History, University of California, Riverside; C. Phil., History, UCLA

TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

Place: Stoffel's office, Rockefeller University.

Dates, length of sessions: October 14, 2002; October 15, 2002; October 16, 2002

Total number of recorded hours: 5.5

Persons present during interview: Stoffel and Maestrejuan.

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, Maestrejuan held a telephone preinterview conversation with Stoffel to obtain written background information (curriculum vitae, copies of published articles, etc.) and agree on an interviewing schedule. She also reviewed documentation in Stoffel's file at the Pew Scholars Program office in San Francisco, including Stoffel'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.

Stoffel did not review the transcript. Consequently, some proper names and other information remain unverified.

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

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