CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

LILI YAMASAKI

The Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

William Van Benschoten

at

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New York City, New York

on

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LILI YAMASAKI

1960 Born in Royal Lake, Michigan

Education

1982 B.S., University of Michigan
1992 Ph.D., University of Texas Health Science Center

Professional Experience

Massachusetts General Hospital
1997 Postdoctorate

Columbia University

Selected Publications

M. Kohn, R. Bronson, E. Harlow, N. Dyson, and L. Yamasaki. "Dp1 is required for extra-embryonic development" Development 130(7): 1295-1305, 2003.

Yamasaki, L. (1999) Balancing proliferation and apoptosis in vivo: the Goldilocks theory of E2F/DP action. Biochem. Biopohys. Acta 1423 :M9-M15.

McCaffrey, J., Yamsaki, L., Dyson, N.J, Harlow, E., and Griep, A.E. (1999) Disruption of retinoblastoma protein family function by human papillomavirus type 16 E7 oncoprotein inhibits lens development in part through *E2F-1*. Mol. Cell. Biol. 19:6458- 646 8.

Tsai KY, Y Hu, KF Macleod, D Crowley, L. Yamasaki and T. Jacks. Molecular Cell 2: 293-304, (1998) "Mutation of E2f-1 suppresses apoptosis and inappropriate S phase entry and extends survival of Rb-deficient mouse embryos."

Pan H, C Yin, NJ Dyson, E Harlow, L. Yamasaki and T Van Dyke. Molecular Cell 2: 283-232, (1998) "Key roles for E2F-1 in signaling p53-dependent apoptosis and in cell division within developing tumors."

Yamasaki, L., R. Bronson N.J. Dyson and E. Harlow, and T. Jacks. (1998) Loss of E2F1 reduces tumorgenesis and extends lifespan in Rb(+/-) mice. Nature Genetics, 18:360- 364.

Yamasaki, L., T. Jacks, R. Bronson, E. Goillot, E. Harlow and N.J. Dyson. (1996) Tumor induction and tissue atrophy in mice lacking E2F-1. Cell 85: 537-548, 1996.

Yamasaki, L. "Chapter: Growth Regulation by the E2F and DP transcription factor families" in Cell Cycle Control, Ed. M. Pagano, Springer-Verlag (1998), pp. 199-227.

ABSTRACT

Lili Yamasaki grew up outside of Detroit, Michigan, the second youngest of six siblings. Yamasaki's father was a physician and her mother a nurse, until she began raising her children. Yamasaki had an early interest in art and in writing, which she believes leads to creativity in science. She excelled in school, developing a proficiency in and curiosity about science, though she had a very well-rounded education and several influential teachers.

Like all of her siblings, Yamasaki entered the University of Michigan to pursue her undergraduate degree, committed to her early interest in chemistry but still diversifying her education with classes in the humanities. During summers she worked or interned in various labs focused on chemistry—at the Michael Reese Hospital and Medical Center in Chicago, with Donald Huppi at Michigan, and at Gelman Instrument Company. While working at the University of Michigan for a year after graduation, for personal and professional reasons Yamaski decided to apply to positions on the west coast, ultimately doing enzymology research in the department of psychiatry at Stanford University with Donna L. Wong and Roland D. Ciaranello. Wanting to return school to obtain a doctoral degree, she applied to a number of graduate programs, ultimately accepting an offer from the University of Texas Health Science Center, where she worked in Robert E. Lanford's laboratory on receptor specificity in nuclear transport. From there she moved on to postdoctoral research on retinoblastoma tumor suppressor protein in mice at Massachusetts General Hospital, with Edward Harlow, Nicolas Dyson, and Tyler Jacks as her mentors. Yamasaki took a position at Columbia University at the end of her postdoctoral research looking at the regulation of growth and development by suppressors and activators.

Throughout the interview she comments upon her role in the laboratory over time, her and her mentors' process of writing journal articles as well as laboratory management styles; and her daughter and balancing family and career. The interview ends with a discussion of patents; the privatization of research; gender issues in science; and the Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences grant.

UCLA INTERVIEW HISTORY

INTERVIEWER:

William Van Benschoten, Interviewer, UCLA Oral History Program; B.A., History, University of California, Riverside, 1990; M.A., History, University of California, Riverside, 1991; C.Phil., History, University of California, Los Angeles, 1995.

TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

Place: Yamasaki's office at Columbia University.

Dates of sessions: January 8 and 9, 2004

Total number of recorded hours: 5

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

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

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

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