**Frederick Becker, M.D.**

**Interview Navigation Materials**

**Date submitted: 21 August 2019**

**Interview Information:**

One session: 19 June 2008

Total approximate duration: about 1 hour

Interviewers: Lesley W. Brunet

**A CV is available. To request supporting materials, please contact:**

Javier Garza, MSIS, jjgarza@mdanderson.org

**Interview Subject Snapshot:**

Name: Frederick F. Becker, MD

Interviewed: 2008

Primary appt: Pathology

Research: molecular pathology, epigenesist, chemical agents

Admin: Chair, Pathology (1976 - ?); First VP of Research (1979 – 1998)

Other:   
Interview link: ; oral history interview, https://mdanderson.libguides.com/BeckerFF

**About the Interview Subject**

Pathologist Frederick F. Becker (b. July 23, 1931 in New York City) was recruited to MD Anderson in 1976 to serve as Chair of Pathology. He quickly made a research impact with his discovery of epigenetic changes during pre-malignancy and in malignant tumors. He served as the first Vice President for Research from 1979 until his retirement in 1998, during which time he redesigned the center’s research format, recruited outstanding basic scientists and department chairs, promoted collaborative interdisciplinary research and shepherded extensive physical expansion. From 1998 until 2001, he was a special advisor to M. D. Anderson President John Mendelsohn, M.D., who credited Becker with “creating the scholarly climate in which research has flourished at M. D. Anderson.”

**Major Topics Covered:**

Personal and educational background; personal stories about MD Anderson figures, recruitment to MD Anderson, promotion to VP of Research, the working environment and culture

Views of R. Lee Clark, Charles LeMaistre, and other early MD Anderson figures

MD Anderson as a Texas institution

The Department of Pathology: vision for in 1976, evolution of

**About transcription, the transcript, and the views expressed**

This interview had been transcribed according to oral history best practices to preserve the conversational quality of spoken language (rather than editing it to written standards).

The Archives may have redacted portions of the transcript and audio file in compliance with HIPAA and/or interview subject requests.

*The views expressed in this interview are solely the perspective of the interview subject.*

*They do not represent the official views of any other individual or of*

*The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.*

**Frederick Becker, M.D.**

**Interview Contents**

**Interview Session One: 19 June 2008**

**Chapter 00A: *Interview Identifier***

**Chapter 01: *R. Lee Clark Chooses His Chairman of Pathology***

**A: Joining MD Anderson/Coming to Texas;[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Joining MD Anderson; Portraits; Professional Path; Evolution of Career; Professional Values, Ethics, Purpose; Talents; Personal Background; Funny Stories;

**Chapter 02: *Stories: The Pathology Department in 1976 and MD Anderson as a Texas Institution***

**B: Building the Institution;[[2]](#footnote-2)**

Research; MD Anderson Culture; On Texas and Texans; Joining MD Anderson;

Personal Background; MD Anderson History

**Chapter 03:  *Stories: A Vision for Pathology and an Office for a New VP of Research***

**A: Overview;[[3]](#footnote-3)**

Personal Background; MD Anderson Culture; Working Environment; MD Anderson History; Funny Stories;

**Chapter 04: *Building the Department of Pathology: Clinical Service, Research, Education***

**B: Building the Institution;[[4]](#footnote-4)**

MD Anderson Culture; The Professional at Work; Education; Research; Building/Transforming the Institution; Personal Background;

**Chapter 05: *The Search for Dr. Clark’s Replacement and Charles Lemaitre’s Administrative Impact***

**B: Overview;[[5]](#footnote-5)**

Portraits; Building/Transforming the Institution; Leadership; D: On Leadership; The Business of MD Anderson; The Institution and Finances; MD Anderson History; Funny Stories;

1. A: Joining MD Anderson; C: Portraits; A: Professional Path; C: Evolution of Career; A: Professional Values, Ethics, Purpose; A: Character, Values, Beliefs, Talents; A: Personal Background; C: Funny Stories; [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. B: Research; B: MD Anderson Culture; D: On Texas and Texans; A: Joining MD Anderson; A: Personal Background; B: MD Anderson History; B: MD Anderson Snapshot; [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. A: Personal Background; B: MD Anderson Culture; B: Working Environment; B: MD Anderson History; B: MD Anderson Snapshot; C: Funny Stories; [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. B: Building the Institution; B: Research; A: Definitions, Explanations, Translations; C: Discovery, Creativity and Innovation; C: Discovery and Success; D: On Research and Researchers; C: Professional Practice; C: The Professional at Work; D: Understanding Cancer, the History of Science, Cancer Research; D: The History of Health Care, Patient Care; D: Technology and R&D; C: Patients; C: Patients, Treatment, Survivors; [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. C: Portraits; B: Building/Transforming the Institution; C: Leadership; D: On Leadership; B: The Business of MD Anderson; C: The Institution and Finances; B: MD Anderson History; B: MD Anderson Snapshot; C: Funny Stories; [↑](#footnote-ref-5)