

**Steven Bass, PhD, President, Bass BioPharm Consulting Group, LLC**

*Tenure at Jefferson:* Dr. Bass was awarded his PhD in Pharmacology from Thomas Jefferson University in 1970.

**Interviewer** – How did you enjoy your tenure at Jefferson?

**Dr. Bass** – I was awarded a PhD in Pharmacology from Thomas Jefferson University (TJU) in 1970. It was a long time ago but I still have very fond memories of TJU because of a dedicated thesis mentor, Dr. Anthony Triolo. He believed that a scientific career is like a pyramid and earning your PhD is the base not the pinnacle. I was also fortunate to have a department head, Dr. Julies Coon, and other members of the department who supported me in my research and academic endeavors. I finished my PhD degree in what I felt was a reasonable period of time, 5 years, and found the research methods and disciplines that I learned to be invaluable as I moved on with my career in the pharmaceutical industry.

**Interviewer** – When did you decide to leave academia to join industry?

**Dr. Bass** – After finishing my PhD I went on to do postdoctoral training at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Pharmacology. Then, having a family, I decided it was time to go to work! I began my career as Director of Toxicity at Carter Wallace. After a short time I was fortunate to get a position as Assistant to the Medical Director at Pfizer Pharmaceuticals in New York City. My second week there, I was off to Florida on the corporate jet and so started my career in the pharmaceutical industry in clinical and regulatory affairs.

**Interviewer** – What were your job search strategies?

**Dr. Bass** – My first clinical position at Pfizer was through an employment agency, but for most of my career changes I was either sought out because of my experience or was able to network based on my previous contacts. My most unique position, in my early career, was offered to me when I was working at a clinical research consulting firm. I was recruited to help start a Japanese pharmaceutical company in the US as Vice President, Director of Scientific and Regulatory Affairs for Fujisawa Pharmaceutical Company. I spent 6 years there and visited the home office in Osaka, Japan, many times. That was a unique cultural experience, which helped when I joined Squibb Pharmaceutical Company as Director of International Regulatory Affairs. I was then fortunate to spend the last 20 years of my career without having to look for a position and recently retired from Bristol Myers-Squibb as Group Director of Global Labeling. At this time, I have started my own consulting firm, Bass Biopharm Consulting Group, LLC, and all of the contacts I made over the years have been invaluable in support of this new endeavor.

**Interviewer** – What was the application and interview process like for an industry position?

**Dr. Bass** – In some ways I think it is more difficult now. The competition is very different for the types of positions I was looking for at that time. I found that the most important thing for me in my search, and for those that I have interviewed, was to have strong interpersonal skills. When all else failed you could just sit back and “chat”. That got me through more often than not! It is, of course, also necessary to be well trained in your discipline but many companies are really looking for a person that can mesh with their corporate philosophy and most importantly work with the hiring manager and his or her team.

**Interviewer** – If there is anything you would like to have done or would like to do differently about your career path, what would it be?

**Dr. Bass** – I was very satisfied with my career choices so would most likely not have done too many things differently. I was fortunate to be able to channel my career into regulatory and clinical early on and would certainly follow the same path. I have had the opportunity to change companies a few times over the years. Looking back, I think I made the best choice I could have at the time, given the information that was available to me. *No regrets and many happy returns!*

**Interviewer** – If there was one major piece of advice for postdocs here at Jefferson, what would it be?

**Dr. Bass** – I, like many others who have been in the pharmaceutical industry for a long time, have had their “ups and downs”. But, I have always believed, and really lived by the approach, “that we should do the best we can in any situation and let the cards fall as they may” – hopefully, on my side, of course! When I have done this over the years, I gained the respect of my peers and it has led to ever-increasing responsibility and various management positions – but not, let me emphasize, without its “ups and downs”!

In addition, to use a tried expression, but one that I truly believe in, “one's reach should always exceed one's grasp. *But never stop reaching.*” Using this approach, I have been able to reach out of my “home office environment” and have presented and published on many activities with the FDA and pharmaceutically related organizations pertaining to major new changes in global labeling over the past 18 years. This has been one of my most rewarding accomplishments. It would not have happened if I had not made those early stretches to breach my objectives and set some of my own, sometimes, to the consternation of my management. But, by never stopping to reach, it worked out after all and I was eventually recognized for my foresight.