



**Interview No.:** OH 1.4

**Title:** Hilda S. Debacker, PhD, Interview by Brooke Fox, 1 July 2010

**Interviewer:** Fox, Brooke

**Interviewee:** Alston, Hazel Doris

**Date:** 2010-07-01

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**Subject (Topical):**

Medical College of South Carolina. -- History.

Medical University of South Carolina. -- History.

Medical University of South Carolina. Dept. of Anatomy.

Education, Medical -- South Carolina -- 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Schools, Medical -- History -- South Carolina.

Chemistry.

Anatomy.

**Subject (Names):**

Debacker, Hilda S. (Hilda Spodheim)

Knisely, Melvin H. (Melvin Henry), 1904-1975.

Taber, Elsie, 1915-2000.

Lockard, Isabel, 1915-2011.

Worthington, W. Curtis (Ward Curtis, 1925- ).

Greenberg, Raymond S.

**Subject (Genre):**

Oral histories.

Interviews.

Personal narratives.

**Summary:**

Hilda Debacker, Ph.D, joined the Department of Anatomy in the College of Medicine in 1955. In this interview Dr. Debacker shares stories about growing up in Romania and emigrating with her family in 1941 to the United States to escape World War II. She discusses the education she received in New York City, including attending Cornell, earning a master's in chemistry from the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, and her eventual master's and PhD degrees in anatomy at the Medical College of South Carolina. Dr. Debacker describes how she became interested in chemistry and the lack of chemistry jobs for women. She recalls moving to Charleston, SC, with her husband. Dr. Debacker describes how she came to work for the Medical College and how she was initially hired by Dr. Melvin Knisely to translate foreign language scientific papers. She describes working with Drs. Knisely, Elsie Taber, Isabel Lockard, and Curtis Worthington, Jr. She discusses researching microcirculation in vivo in Dr. Knisely's laboratory. Dr. Debacker shares memories of what the Medical College was like when she arrived in the mid 1950s. She recalls teaching neuroanatomy to dental students and discusses her overall thoughts on her teaching career. She also discussed the building of the Medical College Hospital.

**Collection:** Waring Historical Library Oral History Collection

**Contributing Institution:** Waring Historical Library (MUSC)

**Media Type:** Oral Histories

**Note:**

Transcript has been edited by the interviewee.

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**Language:** English

**Digitization Specifications:** Audio recorded using a Marantz digital recorder. Archival masters are .mp3 files.

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**Duration:** 0:55:57

**Transcript:** 29 p.