



Caroline Damsky, Ph.D.

Training: She obtained a BA at Stanford University and a Masters in Biology at the University of Pennsylvania. After several years as a technician, she re-entered graduate school and obtained her PhD at Penn in 1973. She moved to the Wistar Institute as a postdoc and was appointed assistant professor there in 1977.

Department and Position: Professor in the Department of Cell and Tissue Biology in the School of Dentistry at UCSF. In 2004, she was appointed the School's Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. After juggling both her administrative and lab responsibilities for a couple of years, Caroline decided with regret to close her lab in 2007, and to focus on her associate dean responsibilities, a major focus of which is to enhance the quality of faculty life.

Career Profile: The Damsky lab has focused on the role of cell- extracellular matrix (ECM) interactions in mammalian development, tissue remodeling, and cell signaling, with emphasis on the integrin family of ECM receptors. Processes and tissues of particular interest have included: trophoblast differentiation and invasion during formation of the placenta; differentiation of osteoblasts during formation and remodeling of bone; and regulation of cell survival and cell growth in fibroblasts and endothelial cells. In all these systems signals from ECM, transduced by integrins, play critical roles in tissue formation and remodeling. Approaches used range from analysis of signaling pathways relevant to cell growth, survival and differentiation using cultured cells, to generation of transgenic animals expressing truncated forms of integrins or ECM components.

In addition to her research accomplishments, Damsky has also been recognized for teaching, receiving a Distinguished Teaching Award from UCSF in 1991 and the Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award from her department in 1992. She attributes this recognition in part to her role in developing the Ph.D. curriculum and graduate training program in the School of Dentistry. Damsky notes that she particularly enjoys "teaching in a seminar format in which I lecture some, but students also present papers and we then have discussion." Damsky has served on the National Institute of Dental Research Council; prior to that, she served on the NIH Cell Biology-2 study section.

Personal Profile: Caroline Damsky grew up in New York City

