



# Yvette Huet Hudson (1962-Present)

Professor of Biology

University of North Carolina, Charlotte

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*“Without people to help you, success can be very difficult.”*  
Yvette Huet-Hudson, 2005.

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## Overview

Yvette Huet received B.A.s in Human Biology and Microbiology in 1984 from the University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS and a Ph.D. (Honors) in Physiology from the University of Kansas Medical Center, Kansas City KS in 1989. She then moved to Monsanto Company where she completed 2 years of postdoctoral work in Immunology. Dr. Huet joined the faculty of the Department of Biology at UNC Charlotte in 1991 as an Assistant Professor and was promoted to Professor in 2005. In 2013, Dr. Huet moved to the Department of Kinesiology. Dr. Huet currently collaborates with Drs. Howden, Arthur, and Marino in Kinesiology and Drs. Leamy and Oliver in the Dept. of Biology and Dr. Steuerwald at CMC. Dr. Huet is also the Director of the ADVANCE Faculty Affairs and Diversity Office and Director of the Health Services Research Doctoral Program in the College of Health and Human Services.

*This interview was conducted in 2010.*

## Early Life and Education

Science has always fascinated Yvette Huet-Hudson. One of four children raised in Kansas City by parents Yolanda, a school psychologist, and Raul, a physician, Huet-Hudson remembers both of her parents—her mother especially—being very supportive of her love for science. As a child, she had mice, rats and fish at home, so that she could discover “how things worked.” Later, as a senior in high school, she chose to fulfill her weeklong internship requirement at a pharmacology research laboratory. Though short, this experience proved to her that she should follow her dreams of working in the biological sciences.

Huet-Hudson went on to attend the University of Kansas, where she double-majored in human biology and microbiology. Before going on to graduate school, Huet-Hudson worked for a year as both an Intro to Biology prep technician and as a research assistant to a geneticist. She then went on to receive her doctorate in physiology from the University of Kansas Medical Center.

Huet-Hudson did two years of post-doctoral research in Monsanto's molecular immunology group. She worked on a variety of projects; the corporation was especially interested in her experience making transgenic animals. Huet-Hudson says her experience at Monsanto was a great one, as it gave her the ability to learn more about immunology in practice.

## Career

Huet-Hudson went directly from Monsanto to her current position at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. She began as an assistant professor, and is now a full professor in the Department of Biology. "I was hired at the beginning of the University's efforts to move its research program forward, at a time when they were interested in hiring new people to do that," Huet-Hudson says. "I was lucky to be part of that process." Huet-Hudson played an instrumental role in making the institution more research-intensive; she helped form the doctorate program, and set up the infrastructure so it would be much easier for emerging scholars to conduct research on the Charlotte campus.

## Highlights

"Being able to continue to succeed at my career, to work with students, publish, and still juggle my family...those are what I consider to be my most significant achievements," Huet-Hudson says. She stays in the field because she finds the work exciting, and the opportunity to work with students makes her daily life interesting. "My work is a never-ending process. I'm excited by the puzzle, and there are always new questions—even when I find a new piece. I'm really fascinated by that," she says.

## Mentoring Others

Throughout her career, Huet-Hudson has mentored other minorities in the field, including high school students, undergraduates, and other faculty members. "I see mentoring as a role that I should and have to do," she says, "because I have benefited so much from my mentors." Huet-Hudson's contributions were recognized in 2004, when the UNC-Charlotte gave her the "Woman of the Year" award for her role in mentoring women. "To be acknowledged is very gratifying because mentoring is so important to me," Huet-Hudson says. She considers receiving this award, as well as becoming a full professor at the University, to be among the highlights of her career.

Huet-Hudson is involved in a number of diversity-related programs on campus. She currently works with the Dean on diversity issues, and as the Ph.D. coordinator, she works to ensure diversity in the student population. Additionally, Huet-Hudson has worked with the Ford Foundation as a North Carolina liaison for many years, and has helped to mentor fellows there. Huet-Hudson helped secure an NIH grant to bring minority high school students to do summer research at the University, and is a part of the McNair Scholars program and the Minority Science Education Network on the Charlotte campus.

## **Importance of Mentoring to Career**

Huet-Hudson says she is fortunate to have had many mentors. She names her mother as the first and most important; she was supportive of Huet-Hudson's passion for science and always encouraged her daughter to be the best she could be. Huet-Hudson also continues to benefit from the advice of her graduate advisor. In addition, she credits her many mentors at the University and at the Ford Foundation Fellows program for teaching her how to get what she needed from her employers, and easing her down the path to promotion and tenure. Other faculty members in Charlotte have also offered help, advice, and most importantly, acceptance. "No one in my family has ever been a faculty member anywhere, so I didn't know what to expect or what I would need to do after I accepted the position," she recalls. Faculty members in other university departments also helped ease the transition process. "I'm especially grateful to the other female faculty members, who taught me how to navigate being a faculty member and a mother at the same time," Huet-Hudson says.

## **Advice to Young Professionals**

To minorities considering a career in the biological sciences, Huet-Hudson provides this advice: "Find mentors that can help you. They can be anywhere; they may even be a bunch of different people. Without people to help you, success can be very difficult."