Rosalind Franklin

About her life

Rosalind Elsie Franklin was born on 25 of July in 1920, in London and she died on 16 of April in 1958, aged 37.

She is the second of five children in her family. She had 3 brothers and a sister. Her Jew family worked in banking for four generations.

Her education as a child was in several prestigious Colleges, including a stay in France with a program that included, sport and sewing, in addition to physics and chemistry.

She came back home and passed an exam to enter in Newham College, University of Cambridge, to study Chemistry.
As her father didn’t like her decision, her aunt beared the cost. She graduated in 1941 and received a fellowship to conduct her to her doctoral thesis.

About her work

In 1942, during the Second World War, she joined an association to study coal. Her research helped to the effort of war. She did a great work in her studies about coal. When the war finished, she defended her thesis.

She met a French Scientist refugee in England during the war who guided her in her next work and lead her to go to France to work in a Chemical Center Service Labotarory from Goverment, in París.

There, she learned the diffraction X-ray technique and she became an expert worldwide.

Then, she applied this technique to DNA molecule.

She came back to England again and entered King’s College of London. There, John Randall, the director, ordered her to study the DNA structure.

Franklin improved the device to obtein images, changed the method and got images with better sharpness.

She made a webinar with her results and Watson and Crick, were in the public.

They watched a lot of images from Franklin without her permission most of the time, and they established the double helix DNA structure.

Important

British woman scientist known for her contributions to the discovery of the molecular structure of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). She also helped to lay the foundation for the field of structural virology.