

CLINICAL OBSERVATION

In this section, we highlight the human side of clinical academic medicine, putting a few questions to a physician at DMS-DHMC.

James Carroll, M.D.

Associate Professor of Medicine (Pulmonology)

Carroll, whose appointment is as a visiting associate professor, specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of pulmonary arterial hypertension and in critical-care medicine. He joined the faculty in 2009.

What made you decide to become a physician?

During college, I was interested in science—specifically, cellular signaling at the level of transmembrane ion channels. But my father encouraged me to pursue a career in medicine. This created some degree of family conflict. For a while I considered doing both, through a combined M.D.-Ph.D. program, then during my clinical clerkships I discovered how much I enjoyed direct patient contact.

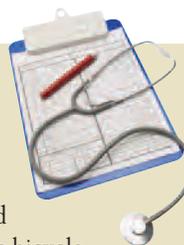
What got you interested in pulmonology?

At a young age I was given an encyclopedia. It had a series of transparent overlays displaying the human lungs in health and disease. I would terrorize my parents' friends (who happened to be smokers) by showing the dramatic images with six-year-old certainty. Fast forward to my medical career. By fate or random chance, I repeatedly ended up on pulmonary-oriented rotations. I admired the thoughtful, physiology-based approach to patient care evidenced by the pulmonologists.

If you weren't a physician, what would you likely be?

Back in the day, I thought I was reasonably facile at computer programming, so I contemplated a career in computer science. I've also considered what my life would be like had I practiced the violin as much as I procrastinated. And I en-

joyed bicycling and have wondered what it would be like to tour the highways and byways of North America on a bicycle.



What's the most recent book you read?

I've been going through a series of children's books. A recent one, *Bear on a Bike*, offers a lively romp through an imaginary land as a young boy and his dog chase after a bear. On a deeper level, this story reflects our ongoing quest to reach our dreams.

What about you would surprise most people?

I learned to drive a tractor long before I learned to drive a car.

What is the greatest frustration in your work? And the greatest joy?

The increasing complexity of medicine provides ample distraction from the primary professional calling. Medicine can be boiled down to providing education to our patients so that they can be informed participants in their health care, and then offering them the tools to assist them in the pursuit of their goals. My greatest joy comes from fostering the professional growth and development of medical learners.

What are qualities you most admire in others?

Patience, clarity of thought, articulate speech.

What kinds of performances do you enjoy?

I enjoy live music of all sorts. Currently, I prefer small-venue performances. My son (age 3) loves live music as well, and so inevitably the two of us will end up close to the performers, moving to the music.

What's the best piece of advice you were ever given, and who gave it to you?

"To yourself be true," my mother told me frequently as I was growing up. As simple as it sounds, this is difficult advice to follow. Implicit in it is the knowledge of who you are (in terms of your beliefs), an awareness of your current actions, and the ability to identify any discrepancies between the two.

Worthy of note: Honors, awards, appointments, etc.

Robert Zwolak, M.D., Ph.D., a professor of surgery, was appointed to the board of governors of the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute. He is the only surgeon on the 21-member board. The institute was established by Congress to oversee research to help doctors and patients assess prevention, treatment, and care options.



Louis Kazal, M.D., an associate professor of community and family medicine, is one of only two physicians serving on the nine-member nominating committee for Vermont's Green Mountain Care Board, which will design and administer Vermont's new health-care reform plan.

Catherine Pipas, M.D., an associate professor of community and family medicine, was named to the Council of Academic Societies of the American Association of Academic Medical Centers and to the board of the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine.



Dean Seibert, M.D., an associate professor of medicine, received the Dr. John Lyons Lifetime Achievement Award, which recognizes humanism in medicine.

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