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

Lin Brown, M.D.
Associate Professor of Medicine

Brown specializes in rheumatology. After doing a residency in internal medicine and a fellowship in rheumatology at DHMC, she joined the staff in 1985. Her primary clinical interests include vasculitis (inflamed blood vessels) and osteoporosis. She also directs the rheumatology fellowship program.

What made you decide to become a physician?
My college roommate was premed and wondered what I would do with my biology major. “Why not medicine?” she asked.

If you weren't a physician, what would you like to be?
A botanist, or maybe an exotic dancer.

How has your field changed over the years?
Rheumatoid arthritis was a chronic, progressive, slowly crippling disease before our current era of biologic therapy. These powerful drugs have revolutionized our ability to control the pain and joint destruction without as many side effects.

Of what professional accomplishment are you most proud?
Our DHMC fellowship in rheumatology. This program has survived, grown, and thrived during an era when many programs lost trainees or lost their accreditation. We not only have more fellows, but they’re top quality.

What advice would you offer to someone contemplating going into your field?
If you like medical mysteries and puzzles, if you love to follow patients over time, if you can live with uncertainty and you want to see all the unsolved medical problems in the hospital, become a rheumatologist. And with the new drugs, you can frequently make patients better.

What misconceptions do people have about the field?
That it is just about diseases without a cure.

What kind of books and movies do you like?
I like fiction that is poignant but not depressing. My last book was A Road Through the Mountains by Elizabeth McGregor. My last movie was Little Miss Sunshine. So funny!

Finish this sentence: If I had more time I would . . .
Hike the Appalachian Trail, go to yoga every day, climb all the 4,000-foot mountains in New Hampshire, travel, get gifts on time for holidays, and do more random acts of kindness.

What’s your favorite nonwork activity?
Spending time with Richard, my husband of 33 years (and an honorary internist), and with my three talented (and non-medical) children—Laura, 23; Eric, 20; and Alex, 11.

What do you admire most in other people?
Their composure (I wear my emotions on my sleeve). And their height (I am 5’1/2’’)! Their composition (I wear my emotions on my sleeve). And their height (I am 5’1/2’’).

What historical event would you most like to have been present at in person?
This sounds bizarre, but I would have liked to have been around during the bubonic plague in the town in England that quarantined itself to prevent the spread of the disease. I wonder how I would have responded to this horrific test.

Who is your fictional hero?
Hermione Granger in the Harry Potter books.

What about you might surprise people?
I took belly dancing in medical school.