

## 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.

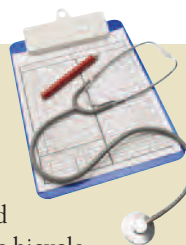
**What got you interested in pulmonology?**

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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about this?" We're pretty comfortable, here in the Upper Valley. You don't have a random shooter like in D.C. in 2002, which was freakier, actually, than 9/11. Yet if we get complacent, people get hurt. That's my greatest lesson learned, academically.

Personally, I'm still processing that day. In fact, every 9/11 gets a little harder.

#### **It gets harder? Why?**

You'd think it wouldn't, but it does. I don't know why, though. I've been up the last three nights, thinking about those 30 guys who were killed the other day in Afghanistan when their helicopter was shot down. A 10-year-old kid said on TV, "Yeah, there were SEALs on that helicopter, but here's a picture of my dad, and he was a pilot." I can't get that out of my mind. There's a lot that has happened as a consequence of that day.

#### **You mean 9/11 is not over, so to speak.**

No. It's not over. And I still have an utter allegiance to those folks who serve.

#### **Are you torn sometimes, being up here in New England instead of in D.C.?**

I miss the energy of D.C. I'd give anything for a sergeant right now, an NCO [noncommissioned officer]. I miss that aspect of the military. But I don't miss the Beltway or the traffic. And it was the right time to move on.

#### **What do you mean you'd give anything for a sergeant?**

They are the backbone of the military. They really are. They work hard. They don't get a lot of credit. They make things happen. I've got great people here, but I miss NCOs.

#### **You're now in a part of the country where military service isn't as visible as it is in other parts of the country. Was that a cultural adjustment for you?**

I had a colonel, he's now Surgeon General of the Army, tell me something a long time ago that has stuck with me: "You know," he said, "thank God we live in a country where we don't have the Army and its tanks in the downtown." Our country is not a military state. The military is here to serve the people. But do I miss hanging around those folks? Absolutely!

I think our challenge is that the military is here, you just don't see it. Vermont has lost more people in Iraq per capita than any other state. But we're rural and we're dispersed and there are no Army bases. New Hamp-

shire and Vermont people step up to the plate and pay the price. But without a center of gravity like a base, it's easy to overlook that John Doe is Sergeant First Class Doe, and though he's a real hero he doesn't have a job now. It's easy to not see that.

#### **Is there anything else you'd like to say about 9/11?**

While I enjoy telling my story, I'm uncomfortable telling my story. Because when I was standing there looking at the building burning, I realized that I had a role in how things unfolded, that a lot of things don't happen unless the leader emphasizes them. But it's the people who execute the plan. It was Lorie Brown who ran the show at the Pentagon on 9/11. It was the Dartmouth-Hitchcock nurses who ran the show when I went on a relief mission last year to Haiti. You've got to build a team. It's not a one-person thing. Yet I'm the guy getting interviewed. But it's all the other people who . . . well, it's a bit corny, but who are the real heroes. They are. I think my job is to give them the tools and the confidence to be able to excel. It was nice to be able to do that at the Pentagon, and it was nice to do it again in Haiti. ■

## Worthy of note

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**Wendy Wells**, M.B.B.S., a professor of pathology, was named chair of the Department of Pathology (see page 50 for a profile of Wells).

**Emily Nicolai**, M.S., a clinical dietitian, was named Young Dietitian of the Year by the Vermont Dietetic Association.

**Mary Theresa Brady**, a licensed nursing assistant, received the Licensed Nurse Assistant of the Year Award from the New Hampshire Hospital Association.

**Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center** was once again ranked among the best hospitals in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*, with its gynecology service coming in 41st in the nation. DHMC was one of just 140 facilities—fewer than 3% of the 4,825 analyzed—to be ranked in even one of 16 specialties.

DHMC's **Breast Imaging Center** earned Breast Imaging Center of Excellence recognition from the American College of Radiology.

DHMC's **Palliative Medicine Program** received a Citation of Honor from the American Hospital Association as part of the association's Circle of Life Awards. ■

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