

tients make finding the nerves difficult and potentially dangerous. The anesthesiologist might have to insert the needle more than once, causing significant discomfort for the patient. “If you can see where your target area is, you don’t have to use as much local anesthetic, because you don’t have to saturate the area,” says Spence.

Aaron Gjerde, a consultant who is working on a business plan for the device, calls it “a simple solution that just worked. It isn’t complicated, doesn’t need training, and doesn’t need expertise.”

The Ultra-Stand has gone through numerous iterations in the past year, says Hickey. Several patents are pending for the device, and several major distributors and companies are interested in carrying the product, according to Gjerde. Gjerde and Hickey have also received an enthusiastic response from physicians in the American Society of Anesthesiologists.

Psyched: And now Thayer engineering students may be helping to improve the Ultra-Stand. “It’s really the collaborative thing all over again,” says Hickey. “We’re going back and both using Dartmouth resources and adding to some student experiences. . . . We’re pretty psyched about that.”

But the bottom line, explains Spence, “was developing a device that would make our lives easier and make the lives of other regional anesthesiologists easier, such that we can improve patient care.”

DANIELLE THOMAS

CLINICAL OBSERVATION

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")!

What would you do if you won \$1 million in the lottery?

Invest for our family’s future, pay off our house, treat those I love, and give to Revels North, Northern Stage, North Country Community Theatre, Opera North, City Center Ballet, etc.

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.