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What was your “ah-ha” moment when you knew sleep medicine was for you? / How did you get into sleep medicine?

I actually stumbled into working as a research assistant on a clinical trial for modafinil, and then trained as a sleep technologist while I was still getting my undergraduate degree. By the time I was 20, I was running my own small 2 bed SDB lab and attended my first SLEEP meeting in 2002. There I was blown away by the mixture of science, clinical medicine, and in particular how much the sleep community embraced trainees. That was when I decided that I wanted to make the commitment to train to be a sleep physician and take my education to the penultimate level.

What is the best part of practicing sleep?

One of my favorite parts of practicing sleep medicine is the juxtaposition of both the science and art of medicine. I love the technology, the numbers and data, and having diagnostic tests, but I also love the mystery of sleep, knowing the limits of our knowledge and understanding. So, it feels like I get to simultaneously use both the right and left sides of my brain to help people sleep better, and have better, healthier lives and understand a part of life that most people take for granted.

What's been your favorite or most memorable moment of your career journey so far?

There have been many, from earning my RPSGT credential, to graduating with my masters and then medical degree, finishing medical school, psychiatry residency, and then sleep fellowship. But my recent work leading the AASM Sleep Technologist Shortage Presidential Committee and recently being asked to co-chair this year's Practice Management Course have so far been the pinnacle of a career in sleep medicine and technology that started when I was a teenager.

What has been the most enjoyable experience as a member of AASM?

Being able to connect with other sleep physicians, researchers, mid-level providers, technologists – the whole sleep team, which I think is a unique aspect of the sleep field that I haven't experienced with other aspects of medicine. I've also really enjoyed working with the AASM Foundation to help develop the next generation of members of the sleep team.

If you could offer one piece of advice to someone who wants to get into the sleep field, what would it be and why?

Find a mentor – in fact, a cadre of mentors. These people will nurture and develop you throughout your career and your personal life. Then develop colleagues. And then mentor others to give back. I'm eternally grateful to Drs. John Harsh, Dan Buysse, Anne Germain, and Dante Picchioni, among many, many others who have given so much to me with their knowledge, time, understanding, patience, forgiveness, and friendship.

List three hashtags that describe you

#sleepdoc #sleeptech #sleepteam