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If you had not chosen medicine as a career, what field might you have gone into instead? Why?

I would have most likely gone into teaching. I feel a sense of obligation to pass along the knowledge I have obtained to others. This is one of the many reasons that I have found my home in academic medicine. It combines two passions: patient care and education.

I also have said that my “Plan B” would be owning a Bed and Breakfast. I enjoy meeting new people from different places and walks of life, and I enjoy doing things that make others feel valued and special.

Why did you choose to specialize in Obstetrics and Gynecology?

The combination of surgery and medicine is best reflected in our field. We form long-standing relationships with our patients, guide them through pregnancies, losses, health challenges that impact their quality of life and we

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have the skillset to operate and “fix” certain conditions when indicated. To be able to care and guide people through their reproductive years and beyond into the midlife years is extremely rewarding. The variety of conditions that our profession can care for allows for so much opportunity to tailor one’s interests as their career develops. For me, I still very much love to practice the full scope of obstetrics and gynecology. I know I can lean on my sub-specialty colleagues for additional guidance when indicated. Without hesitation, I would pick this field of medicine over and over again.

Who in Obstetrics and Gynecology do you find most inspirational? Why?

- **Dr. Makeba Williams**, Vice Chair of Professional Development and Wellness, Washington University School of Medicine, St Louis.

Dr Williams has most recently become a mentor and friend. In the short time I have known her, I have been easily inspired by her confidence, knowledge, and wealth of insight into how to work with others and make impactful and inspirational changes in our profession.

- **Dr. MaryGrace Elson**, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology-University of Iowa, retired.

Dr Elson has been a mentor that has offered direct transparent advice and support over the course of my academic career. Her accomplishments and contributions to our specialty are abundant. I am blessed to still be able to call on her if I need guidance.

- **Dr. Jennifer Niebyl**, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology-University of Iowa, retired.

While I only was able to work with Dr. Niebyl peripherally for a short period of time before she retired, it was clear that she was a giant in our field. She possessed a vast degree of wisdom and experience while remaining humble and approachable.

What have you enjoyed most about your clinical experiences? Why?

Relationships.

That trusted relationship that is built between physician and patient is a special and unique opportunity to have a positive and supportive influence on someone’s life.

Why did you choose to work in an academic setting?

As stated above, if I did not go into medicine, I would have entered some type of teaching profession. Education is one of the most empowering and impactful professions. I remain a student myself and the environment of academia demands that I continue to elevate and challenge my own knowledge base. Because we care for some of the most complex medical and surgical cases in our state, we must set high expectations for ourselves to be at the top of our game, always.

What is the best part of working in academics?

I feel so fortunate to have a front seat supporting the progression of

fundamental concepts, surgical and obstetrical skills that our learners develop through their training. Our learners motivate me to strive to be the best I can be both clinically and professionally.

If you could give one piece of advice to medical students considering entering your field, what would it be?

“If it were easy, everyone would do it. Hard is what makes it great.” -Tom Hanks.

You will have the privilege to bear witness and provide care and expertise during some of the best moments in another human being’s life; and you will also be there to guide another through devastating circumstances. You will sometimes miss important family and personal engagements due to the demands of your profession. At times you may question if it is worth it. Remember that you have been gifted this opportunity. When you look back upon your accomplishments, you will see that some of the most rewarding moments (professionally and personally) required the most sacrifice.

Most importantly, strive to genuinely treat every patient the way that you would want your own loved ones listened too and cared for.

How do you balance work life and home life in your busy career?

I have built in some hard boundaries with my time. While I sometimes still have a bit of that creep that enters that space, it still helps me to have it in place and dedicate that important time that I need with my husband, children and friends.

How would you summarize your personality using just three words?

Helpful

Affirming

Honest

Which book (fiction or non-fiction) would you recommend for people in you field to read?

Estrogen Matters, by Avrum Bluming and Carol Tavris-this book helps to highlight that we must constantly acknowledge our own bias as we critically evaluate the literature that directs the patient care guidelines that we practice.

If you could make one change in the way medicine is practiced in your field, what would it be? Why?

More time for direct patient care and incorporation of time dedicated to completing clinical tasks related to patient care.

If you could change one thing about the world we live in, what would it be? Why?

Genuine mutual respect for the value in our differences and complete elimination of all forms of abuse. If all children could be raised in loving, supportive and respected environments this alone could have tremendous impact and prevention of so many of the atrocities that afflict our world.

Who is the person in your life you would most like to thank?

My husband, Matt. His support and his own career sacrifices throughout our marriage have helped me to meet so many of my own professional and personal goals. He is an exceptional

father to our children, and he takes care of ensuring that we are all taken care of. He helps to alleviate some of that fierce “mom guilt” for not being home as much as I would like to be. He pushes me to be the best version of myself in all that I do.