



Today's Podiatrist: Dr. Nancy Parsley Surgeon Turned Educator

A dedication to academia can probably explain the reason that one of podiatric medicine's most gifted surgeons chose to pursue a career in medical education as the Dean of the Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine in Illinois. Dr. Nancy Parsley was just recently named to the position of Dean, and she is excited about the profession's future, which will provide both opportunities and rewards for current practitioners and entering students.

As a student, Parsley never considered a career in medicine until her sophomore year at Mundelein College in Chicago. In fact, her undergraduate degree is in business management. But like many young people, she was inclined to consider a career in podiatric medicine after visiting a podiatrist. "I was immediately influenced by the interaction with patients. After spending time in that practice, I realized that this career would challenge me daily while allowing me to positively impact the lives of others."

Parsley graduated cum laude from the Scholl College in 1993 and immediately entered surgical residency in northern Virginia where she trained in all aspects of foot and ankle surgery. She also completed post-graduate training in lower extremity reconstructive plastic surgery at Georgetown University Medical Center. After residency, despite all that surgical training, Parsley opted to apply to be a Congressional Fellow. She was selected and worked on the Health Subcommittee of the House Ways & Means Committee in the U.S. Congress from 1996 to 1997.

Finally settling into part-time private practice in 1997, Parsley concurrently worked for the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) as the Policy and Practice Officer. She soon realized that the responsibilities were too vast for a part-time position, so she left practice to work full-time for APMA. Steeped in insurance issues, policy, and government, she thrived there until she was tapped for Associate Dean of Academic Affairs by the Scholl College.

"As you can tell, my career path has been non-traditional. In podiatric medicine, some of us focus on providing quality care to patients and on establishing ties within a community, some of us develop international reputations as researchers, some concentrate on improving the practice environment through governmental interactions and medical relations, while others devote their time and talents to educating the next generation of physicians. None of these paths are mutually exclusive, but we are fortunate in that we have many exceptional individuals who can satisfy the needs of the profession."

Parsley now spends her days interacting with students, faculty, and colleagues, while still spending time seeing patients in the college clinic. She places tremendous value on an interprofessional approach to education. "There is a unique and exciting energy that exists when working with students, and the ability to impact the future of the profession by influencing those who *are* the future provides endless opportunities and rewards," states Parsley.

For more information, contact the APMA at careerinfo@apma.org or call 301-581-2980. To view our career “music” video, use this link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHSbeTJUcCM

