



Today's Podiatrist: Dr. Jacqueline Brill Surgeon and Missionary

It's not easy returning from a medical mission, but stepping back into her life in Miami, Florida was particularly difficult for Jacqueline Brill, DPM, after she spent nearly a week in Haiti this past year. "You feel so much guilt and sadness when you get back home. You want to stay there and keep helping as many people as possible," Dr. Brill said, her voice cracking.

Brill and a number of other podiatric physicians from the Barry University School of Podiatric Medicine (BUSPM) spent time in Haiti as part of the University of Miami's Project Medishare in a tent hospital outside of the Port-au-Prince airport. Dr. Brill and the medical team saw up to 70 patients per day while working 12-hour shifts. She dealt mainly with post-operative complications from surgeries and amputations, performed in the chaotic days immediately following the earthquake. Dr. Brill also treated acute injuries from car accidents, a gunshot wound on a police officer, and severe fractures from children falling off piles of rubble.

However, despite the sadness and frustration she felt upon returning, Dr. Brill also felt an overwhelming sense of pride. "I'll never question if I made the right career choice," she stated. "In Haiti, the medical decisions I made were changing people's lives, and to have an experience where you say, 'Oh, my God, I'm a doctor and helping people'—that's what it should be all about. It was a life-changing experience."

Dr. Brill began her career as a student at BUSPM after graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree from St. Thomas University. She completed a podiatric surgical residency at Cedars Medical Center in Miami and is now board certified in podiatric surgery and in wound management. She serves as assistant professor of podiatric surgery at Barry University and is the chief of podiatry and director of medical education for the podiatry residency program at Mt. Sinai Medical Center.

Jackie Brill was destined to find podiatric medicine. She was tracking for allopathic medical school when she happened to visit a podiatrist in her area to receive treatment for a congenital foot deformity. After that consult, she decided to research the career more carefully. All her research into careers in podiatric medicine led Brill to apply to Barry and to find her passion in podiatric surgery.

After residency, Dr. Brill was working part time in private practice and part time at Barry. She was virtually thrust into teaching by a fellow colleague and residency director. "I never thought I'd like it," she laughed. "I had complete stage fright at first, but then it grew on me." She now teaches surgery and trauma both in the classroom and the clinic and finds that the best part of each day is imparting knowledge to students. "It's great to see students absorb the information you are teaching. That's the part of my job that is so rewarding."

There is no typical day for Dr. Brill. While she and her husband are managing a household with four children, Brill is also busy teaching, seeing patients, performing surgery, and attending meetings. "Lots

of meetings,” she said. But whether she’s at Mt. Sinai Medical Center, in the classroom, or in Haiti, it’s the patients that mean the most. After her medical mission, Brill realized that helping people is “what it’s all about.” She reflected that the mission there was a “life-changing experience.”

For more information contact the APMA at careerinfo@apma.org or call 301-581-9280. To view our career “music” video, use this link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHSbeTJUcCM . Portions of this profile have been excerpted from *MEDexpress*, a publication of the Barry University