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MID AMERICA ORTHOPEDICS



How did you choose a career in health care? When I went off to college, I started taking courses in business and biology and gravitated more to the sciences. My courses in anatomy and physiology really sparked my interest in focusing on a career in teaching or medicine. Eventually I made the decision to pursue a medical career and completed medical school at the University of Kansas. During medical school, I loved studying pathology and anatomy and realized surgery would be my specialty. My surgical rotations included meeting and working with some impressionable doctors in orthopedic surgery where I found my true calling.

What is your greatest professional achievement? Becoming an orthopedic surgeon would have to be my greatest professional achievement. Medical school, orthopedic surgery residency and sports fellowship was a long road but well worth it. I get to work with some of the finest orthopedic surgeons in the country here in my hometown. During my sports fellowship in Cincinnati, my mentor Dr. Frank Noyes would talk about the great Dr. Henning and the pioneer he was in knee reconstructive surgery. Practicing orthopedic surgery in my hometown was a dream of mine that for the last 15 years has been a reality.

What is the biggest career challenge you have faced? The biggest challenge in medicine is doing what's right for your patients even when their insurance may not cover the treatment. The constant fight with insurance companies to get surgery approved or being told a patient can't have a surgery or implant they need because their insurance won't approve it can be very frustrating. All we can do as caring physicians is continuing to fight for our patients but be cognizant of the increasing costs of health care.

Who was your most important mentor and what was their best advice? I have had several important mentors, but Dr. Richard Wall was one of the most important. He was my biology professor at Tabor College and was instrumental in me majoring in Biology. He was a wonderful professor who made studying the human body exciting. Along with sharing his faith, he was always very encouraging to me when struggling with a solution in class. He would say, "It's OK to fail, just keep trying until you get it right." This advice has stuck with me throughout my life.

What is the best advice you would give to someone considering a career in health care? Don't go into medicine unless you truly love helping people. Nothing compares to the feeling I get when a patient of mine tells me they are back to living their life and enjoying the activities they couldn't do before their treatment. Getting a young athlete back to their sport or an elderly patient back to their evening walks with their spouse is very fulfilling for me.

What do you like to do in your spare time? My spare time is spent with my wife and kids, and with three teenagers at home, it's never a dull moment. You will find me either watching a sporting event for one of our kids or all of us at home watching a movie. Occasionally I will pull out the guitar and pluck a tune.

