



Saib Isterabadi, MD

City: Marlette, MI

Date of Graduation from Medical School: 1957

Medical School Graduated From: Royal College of Medicine, Baghdad, IRAQ

Residency Location: Mount Sinai Beckman, New York, NY

Specialty: Surgery

What factors influenced your decision to become a physician? My older brother, six years ahead of me went to medical school and shared what he learned with the family, so I followed in his footsteps.

Did you have any mentors or influential people in the course of your medical training or career who made an impact on you? Dr. Ginsburg at Mt. Sinai Hospital, New York, Chronic Disease; Dwight E. Harken, Mt. Auburn, Cambridge, MA, Mitral Valve Surgery.

Did you experience a defining moment that made you feel you had become a physician? One year after graduation, two soldiers of the Iraqi Army broke down the door of my house at midnight and came to my bedroom, then told me not to be scared. They told me an officer attempted suicide and asked for my help. The officer was bleeding from his jugular vein and laceration of the trachea – I repaired it.

As you were training to be a physician, what one piece of advice could you not have done without? Do no harm. Ask questions when you don't know. Refer patients and consult.

What advice would you give to medical students graduating in the class of 2007? Do no harm. Ask when you do not know. Do not forget – Ask why?

What is the most significant medical innovation you experienced in your years of practice? Minimally invasive surgery, but the progress of medicine has been so significant from diagnostic tools (CT scans, MRI's, ultrasound, computer, robotic surgery, etc.)

What regrets, if any, do you have about your medical career? I left Iraq in 1962 for Scotland; I got my FRCS in surgery from both Edinburgh and Glasgow, then came to the USA in 1966 and I did my board in surgery and thoracic surgery in 1975. I thought I could help Iraq, I failed.

Is there one patient, situation or incident that stands out above all others in your career? In 1986, the head nurse at the hospital I worked at came into the office for consultation and had cardiac arrest. She was resuscitated successfully in the office. She is still alive and well.