

Cyndi Yag-Howard, MD: Seeking a life fully lived

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Staff News Writer

The AMA “Members Move Medicine” series profiles a wide variety of doctors, offering a glimpse into the passions of women and men navigating new courses in American medicine.

On the move with: Cyndi Yag-Howard, MD, a dermatologist in Naples, Florida.

AMA member since: 1989.

What inspired me to pursue a career in medicine: Because no one in my family was a physician, I had never considered a career in medicine—that is, until I came home for spring break during my junior year at Duke.

I realized that I had not yet learned what I really wanted to learn. I wanted to know how the amazing human body worked and how I could have a positive impact on making people’s lives better. When I returned from spring break, I met with my counselors and changed my entire schedule to become a pre-med student as a senior! Despite the fact that I spent my senior year in the library while my friends enjoyed their lightened course load, I knew I made a great decision.

How I move medicine: I get involved, both locally and nationally, in my community, in organized medicine, in legislative activism, in charity work, in medical education, and as a volunteer for the Department of Veterans Affairs. With the belief that anything is possible with vision, determination, commitment and drive, I work with like-minded enthusiasts compelled by our passion to be agents of positive change in medicine and the world.

Career highlights: I am very proud to have served as chair of our AMA Specialty and Service Society Caucus, our AMA Council on Constitution and Bylaws and our AMA Dermatology Section Council. These roles have given me the opportunity to work with exceptionally talented and devoted people who share my values and commitment to the betterment of our health care system.

Likewise, I am particularly proud of the volunteer work I do for our Department of Veterans Affairs and service on the board of multiple charities. However, I am most proud of our family, our devotion to

each other and our commitment to contributing to society.

This year, our son, Benji Howard, with the help of my husband, Corey Howard, MD, and I, founded World We Share, an organization whose purpose is to spread a message of positivity about world peace and to change the mindset to one of unity whereby all people work together to achieve anything. We make WWS Bracelets of Unity that are sold through donations. The proceeds go to Camp Discovery—a program for children living with life-altering skin diseases—and to help fund Lyme disease research.

Advice I'd give to those interested in pursuing a career in medicine: There is no profession more rewarding than medicine. However, it is a lifetime commitment to education, contribution and giving back. Make sure you take time to care for yourself and those you love.

Aspect of my work that means the most: Every aspect of my life and profession are meaningful. I do not “work.” I live life fully.

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