

Orthopaedic Connection

Dr. Haverbush, Why Orthopaedic Surgery?

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

At the annual meeting of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons a few weeks ago there was a large exhibit encouraging members of the Academy like myself to share with our patients and their families why we became Orthopaedic Surgeons. I thought about it and decided to go ahead and share my story with you.

I'll go back even somewhat further in time because you don't just "become" an Orthopaedic Surgeon.

I grew up in Toledo, Ohio and I remember in grade school always going to career day programs that featured a doctor. I don't know why I started telling people I was going to be a doctor, because I had no role model physicians in the family. And I never changed my mind or thought about being anything else from St. Catherine's grade school on. In high school at Central Catholic I took all the required classes to begin a "pre med program" at the University of Toledo. After college graduation I attended the University of Michigan Medical School.

Even as a young doctor after graduation I was not certain which direction I would take. It was during my internship at the Cleveland Clinic that I began to think about Orthopaedic Surgery. It was there I met and worked with a young Orthopaedic Surgeon who took me under his wing so to speak and encouraged me to consider specializing in Orthopaedic Surgery. I was also drawn to Neurosurgery and Plastic Surgery, but because of that one Orthopaedic Surgeon I decided to make his specialty my career also. And as the saying goes, I never looked back. My mentor was put in my life for a reason. All these years later I firmly believe that to be true.

In the exhibit at the meeting I referred to earlier we were asked to answer certain questions for our patients.

Dr. Haverbush, What is the most rewarding part of being an Orthopaedic Surgeon?

- I have a way to relieve pain and improve a person's quality of life by what I do in a very tangible way, such as joint replacements and repairing very complicated fractures and countless other procedures as well.
- It is often challenging to figure out what a patient's problem is and very rewarding to be able to use my technical skill to treat and if required repair the problem.
- Orthopaedic Surgery treats the entire musculoskeletal system and all ages from babies to very elderly patients with hip fractures.
- To have a profession in which I am truly doing what I want and look forward to coming to work each day.

Do you have any other professional or civic activities?

I am the Medical Director of the Wound Treatment Center at MidMichigan Health – Gratiot Medical Center in Alma.

I am a member of the Board of Trustees of Alma College which I feel is an important commitment of my time and energy.

What do you like to do in your free time?

Being a University of Michigan Medical graduate I have developed a very strong connection to the University in many ways. I really have very little “free time”, but Alice and I spend what little time we have in Ann Arbor at various events and functions of the University. In 2007 we made a major commitment to the University of Michigan Athletic department and established The Alice M. and Thomas J. Haverbush, M.D. Endowed Scholarship in Men’s Ice Hockey.

Our scholarship will continue to educate and support student athletes forever or as long as the University of Michigan exists which we think will be a very long time!

When I was encouraged to write this article by the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons I thought it was time to do another personal article. There have been two others in the past. An Orthopaedic Surgery Christmas Story and James K. Hall, M.D. My Patient, My Friend. The articles are in the archive if you would care to see them. Thanks for reading my story.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

See you next week.

Gratiot County Herald Archive and Office Website

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It contains a world of musculoskeletal information you and your family and friends can use! Website, Your Orthopaedic Connection, Archive of all previous GCH articles. Please check it out. Be well.

Dr. Haverbush