

## Susan A. Cantrell

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### *We Can Have It All, We Just Can't Always Do It All*

You can easily spot Susan across the room at a meeting as she is always one of the best-dressed! Her competence is more than appearance, however. She has successfully integrated marriage, raising two children, and her career. While at the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP), she and her team developed, and successfully grew ASHP Advantage, which specializes in conducting cutting-edge continuing educational programs. Susan has always been an innovator, adopting new technology such as podcasts, webinars, and electronic audience feedback, into educational programs to improve the profession.

Exploring new leadership vistas outside of pharmacy, Susan is currently the Senior Vice President and Managing Director of DIA Americas with the Drug Information Association (DIA), a global, nonprofit association that provides knowledge resources across the full spectrum of medical product development and fosters innovation to improve health and well-being worldwide.

Susan received her bachelor of science in pharmacy from the University of Mississippi and completed a residency at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Susan's letter offers the following advice: *When faced with difficult decisions that place your personal or family interests at odds with your career, the best you can do is make sure to give equal consideration to career and personal factors when making career choices and deal with the guilt about missing the dance recital, soccer game, or the important budget meeting.*



Dear Young Pharmacist,

**Y**ou have chosen your career wisely! In addition to the personal and professional fulfillment you will receive from helping patients throughout your career, the practice of pharmacy offers you so many career opportunities. At some point in your career, you will likely be faced with a difficult decision that places your personal or family interests at odds with those of your career. These decisions are intensely personal, but I will share some insights from my own career that I hope will help you.

I was drawn to pharmacy by my first “real” job, a clerk in a local community pharmacy during high school. I loved the community pharmacy environment and envisioned myself graduating from pharmacy school and working part-time in a community pharmacy while raising a family. My career aspirations shifted during my last year of pharmacy school when I did an experiential rotation in a hospital pharmacy department. Hospital practice intrigued and excited me and the director of pharmacy, an experienced and capable female leader, served as a strong role model. I was hooked.

As luck would have it, during that rotation I learned about a new hospital pharmacy residency program at University of Mississippi Medical Center, which could prepare me for my intended career in hospital pharmacy. I was very motivated to apply; however, I was a new mother with an infant son born the week classes began in my final year of pharmacy school. Just getting through that final year would be a significant challenge. The idea of committing to a year of residency with the stress of being the only resident and the first resident admitted to the program and working a 12-days-on, 2-days-off schedule was daunting. This was the first of many decisions I would have to make where my career and family interests were seemingly juxtaposed.

I do not remember exactly what factors tipped the scale, but I decided that residency training was the right path for me. Although it would be difficult, I had a support system of family and friends to get me through it. Even though I would be earning less than half of what most of my classmates were being offered, it seemed like a