Diane B. Ginsburg

Serve Your "Every Patient"

Those of us who know Diane well might describe her as someone unfazed by the level of stress that would send some right to the cardiologist, easily juggling priorities that would cause many to crack, and doing so in this season's premier designer shoes. When things start to feel manageable, Diane purposely goes in search of new challenges. As an example, she decided to pursue her doctorate degree at one of the busiest times of her life, a decision prompted by tragedy. Teaching is her passion, and she realized the degree would help her be a better professor and administrator. She finished her PhD coursework at the University of Texas at Austin with a perfect 4.0, of course.

Pharmacy was not in Diane's original career plans, but serendipity played a significant role in her career path. As with other aspects of Diane's life, once she decided to be a pharmacist she was all in, working almost full-time as a pharmacy intern while in pharmacy school.

Diane is currently Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and Clinical Professor of Health Outcomes and Pharmacy Practice at the University of Texas College of Pharmacy. She completed her bachelor of science degree in pharmacy at the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy, a master of science degree in hospital pharmacy at the University of Houston College of Pharmacy, and completed a two-year ASHP-accredited residency in hospital pharmacy administration at The Methodist Hospital in Houston, Texas. An active American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) member and volunteer, Diane is a past-president of ASHP and former chair of the board of the ASHP Research and Education Foundation.

Diane's letter describes *the concept of "every patient" taught to her by her mother*, a philosophy that has made her a better pharmacist.

Dear Young Pharmacist,

I did not start out wanting to be a pharmacist. I graduated high school a year early and went away to college right after I turned 17. I thought I wanted to be a surgeon like my uncle, who was chief of surgery at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. I remember how he cared for his patients and talked to me about medicine. I was a good student in math, chemistry, and biology. Medicine was a good place for me. When I told my chemistry professor that I was pre-med, she suggested pharmacy school, as the curriculum was a great foundation for medical school. I remember telling the admissions committee that I had always wanted to be a pharmacist, that I had actually counted jellybeans with my mom's icing knife as preparation to fill prescriptions. I was lying through my teeth, as I had no idea what a pharmacist did. By some miracle, I was accepted. In 2005, I received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy. During my lecture to the students, I confessed and told them my story. My point in "coming clean" was that you never know where a path will lead you and to be open-minded. Had I not applied to pharmacy school, the wonderful opportunities that have come my way would have never been presented to me had I chosen a different direction.

In my first year in pharmacy school I learned the important lesson about "every patient" from my mother. My uncle had a very large surgical practice and needed someone to manage his office. He asked my mother, an accountant, to come and work for him. I watched how my uncle and mother cared for his patients. My mother would always tell me that every patient had a story; every patient was significant to someone. The patients were spouses, parents, grandparents, sisters and brothers, children, and friends. She would greet them with a smile, ask how they were doing, and listen to their answers. I was amazed how she did this with such sick people. What she told me stayed with me and guides my every decision:

> *Remember, every patient is someone significant. When you care for your patients, most of them will be perfect strangers. These patients deserve the very best we have to give them;*