

Delia Charest Carias, *PharmD, BCPS*



Sometimes Others Know You Better Than You Know Yourself

Many of us can describe with great precision how we came to choose pharmacy as our life's work. Yet for some of our colleagues, it is almost as if the profession of pharmacy *chose them*. Such is the case with Delia, a rising star from Mississippi and the daughter of two pharmacists. Despite having the utmost respect for her pharmacist parents and their chosen profession, Delia had no intention of following in their footsteps when she began her college career as a music major. While pursuing her degree, she worked as a part-time pharmacy technician, which exposed her to the profession and ignited her interest in pharmacy. The rest, as they say, is history . . . in the making.

Delia Charest Carias is currently Medication Use Policy Coordinator at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Delia received her PharmD degree from Samford University, McWhorter School of Pharmacy. She completed a postgraduate year (PGY) 1 residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital and a PGY2 specialty residency in pharmacy administration at Methodist University Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. She is an active member and involved volunteer in ASHP, the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society, and the American College of Clinical Pharmacy.

Delia's advice is: ***Sometimes it is necessary to look through the eyes of others to learn our true path.***

Dear Young Pharmacist,

Growing up as the child of two pharmacists, I knew at a young age exactly what I wanted to do with my life—be a musician. Despite my parent's constant coaxing to look at pharmacy as a career, I knew what I wanted to do and no one could tell me otherwise. The first step involved moving out of state to pursue training.

Moving out of state did not come at a cheap price; living on my own meant I needed a job. As a full-time music major, I needed something with flexible hours that could fit around my schedule. Again, my parents suggested I look into pharmacy. Although I had successfully avoided working in my father's community drug store while I was growing up, I thought working in pharmacy now might be a good idea.

I was lucky enough to find a job as a pharmacy technician at a local pharmacy near my apartment. It wasn't long before I wanted to know all about the medications. I would call my mother nightly when I got off work and ask about specific medications, what they were used for, and how they worked in the body. For the first time, I was interested in the stories she would tell about her days at the hospital. In addition, I was reading pharmacy journals in my spare time. This is when I knew I had "a problem." I came to the realization that maybe this pharmacy thing was for me; maybe my parents had been right all along. Because I was over half-way finished with my music degree, I decided to complete it while getting my prerequisites for pharmacy school. I took summer and night classes and finished in 4 years. My parents were ecstatic to have me follow in what we call our family business, and I can now admit that they were right all along.

Growing up, I was lucky to see both the community and hospital settings of the profession. This exposure allowed me to enter pharmacy school knowing exactly the career I wanted. My parents were well respected in their chosen fields, my father with his community pharmacy practice and my mother serving as a clinical pharmacist in a hospital long before it became a common practice. While I admired my father, it was my mother's career—being part of the medical team and interacting with patients to improve their care—that fascinated me.

My passion was further strengthened while working at the University of Alabama at Birmingham Hospital (UAB) as a pre-pharmacy and pharmacy student. UAB had a wonderful summer program, which allowed students to work as pharmacy technicians full time and shadow a clinical pharmacist 1–2 days a week. I spent time shadowing pharmacists in oncology, transplant, and various critical care units. During this time, I fell in love with the medical critical care unit.

So, it was settled; during my first year of pharmacy school, I had a goal to become a critical care clinical pharmacist. I knew it was going to be difficult, and that I needed to do well in pharmacy school and complete 2 years of postgraduate residency. I was up for the challenge. I loaded up my fourth year rotations with as many critical care rotations as allowed. However, despite knowing my path, I decided that fourth year rotations would be a perfect time to take advantage of my uncle's proximity to Washington, DC. In addition to my required and critical care elective rotations, I asked for rotations in our nation's capital and was excited to get