

# WDS President Spotlight: Dr. Molly Hinshaw

By Shadi Damanpour, MD



Dr. Molly Hinshaw, WDS President

Molly Hinshaw, MD is an Associate Professor and Chief of Dermatopathology at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health and UW Health in Madison, WI where she also completed her undergraduate and medical training. Dr. Hinshaw completed her dermatology residency the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics, and her dermatopathology fellowship at the University of Colorado Health Science Center.

Dr. Hinshaw is very active in multiple professional organizations and passionate about her volunteer efforts. She is a member of the UW Hospital medical board and past president of the Wisconsin Dermatological Society. In addition to her role in the WDS, she served as a Section Editor for *JAMA Dermatology* and an Advisory Board Member of the AAD. She has served on the Board of Directors for

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dane County, matching children with adult mentors. Dr. Hinshaw is the author of over thirty peer-reviewed publications. Her clinical expertise includes melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer as well as nail disorders.

## How did you initially become involved in the WDS? How do you think your involvement has helped your career?

I initially became involved in the WDS when I was a resident, because I thought it would be fantastic to interact with other female dermatologists. I was lucky enough to get a travel grant to attend the WDS Forum in Toronto. As I walked into the registration hall, I met Dr. Lenore Kakita, who could instantly see that I was a wide-eyed newbie. She warmly welcomed me and introduced me to other wonderful people. My first experience was so positive and made me feel that WDS lives its visions of mentorship, networking, and bringing people together for personal and professional development. I am grateful to the WDS and strive to pay it forward.

## Who were your mentors and how did they help you at different stages in your career?

It was really because of my husband, Louis', mentorship that I applied for medical school. He was pre-med and knew I was interested in helping people through science and healthcare so encouraged me to go into medicine. He showed me the list of pre-requisites for medical school and I thought "I could do that!"

Then early in my career as a dermatologist, I applied for and received a grant from the WDS to train with Dr. Phoebe Rich who is an international expert in nail disorders. She generously created an incredible learning opportunity for me; she made her entire schedule pertinent to nails while I was with her, and set up sessions for me to learn from her dermatopathologist. It was fantastic and truly a career changing experience!

**She sponsored me by inviting me to give my first nail disorders talk.** Thanks to her mentorship, I started a nail clinic at UW-Madison, have taught across the country on nail disorders and started a nail cadaver course

for our dermatology residents. As Dr. Rich's mentee, I continue to rely on her for guidance and support. She wrote a letter of recommendation for my promotion. I am forever grateful for the mentorship and sponsorship I received from Dr. Rich that was made possible by a WDS grant.

### **How did you decide to pursue a career in academic medicine? What is the biggest challenge you've encountered in academia?**

There is so much overlap between the interests and contributions of dermatologists in academics and private practice. We are all in this together – taking care of patients, training residents, and contributing to our field. When I started, my thinking was that in academics I would have routine experiences of managing complicated patients, pursuing my academic interests, and teaching and mentoring the next generation of dermatologists. I have found this to be true for me in academics and these opportunities are also available in private practice.

I have a passion for mentorship, which stems from seeing the difference that mentorship makes in the trajectory of one's personal and professional life. I grew up in a supportive family who encouraged me to aim high and work for what I wanted in life. I want that mentorship and support for everyone.

Another aspect of academics in which a strong network is crucial is research and project development. In our careers, we will always come up against challenges – some that we're aware of now and some that we cannot foresee. Typically, those are challenges that others have faced in some capacity. That is why the sharing of experiences, through WDS, is so valuable. The ability to build your village and learn from others is a richly rewarding and time efficient means of advancing your career. In the WDS, you're within one degree of separation from so many amazing dermatologists across the country. The knowledge you can gain from peers, both senior and junior to you with diverse backgrounds and skill sets is invaluable.

### **What leadership skills were the most difficult for you to develop?**

I am always trying to evolve and grow – and make that an active process. I have been to various leadership development courses, and am currently enrolled in the Professional Leadership Development Program at UW. I am constantly trying to learn and improve in all aspects of leadership. One thing that has really informed my leadership style is taking the time to recognize my strengths and areas I need to grow in, using tools such as the leadership color wheel, Myer-Briggs, or 360-degree leadership assessment. Being aware of my blind spots and working on those is one of the most important things for me. I try to accomplish everything that I need to in the most efficient manner. Having members of the team that ask good questions will slow down a process so it can thoroughly vetted. Recognizing and working on our blind spots is impossible without input from others, and it is useful to be aware of them and complement one another by having someone on your team who has those skills. It is important for me to continue to actively evolve as a female dermatologist and a leader, because it won't happen without a concerted effort.

### **Do you have advice for maintaining a healthy work-life balance?**

A large part of work-life balance is allowing the different parts of your life to bend and flex with each other. In order to do that, a strong support system is key. For some, it is family, friends, paid help, a good partner or any combination of those. Having a supportive spouse is such an important foundation for women. In addition to working overtime in our careers, women tend to take on a greater percentage of non-paid work at home. An

effort can be made to balance that non-paid work closer to 50/50 with our partners. I also hope that WDS can be a part of that professional and personal support system. That is our mission and guiding compass.

### **What is your vision for the future of the WDS? What do you hope to accomplish as President?**

My focus this year is on leadership, mentorship, and sponsorship for our members. I am going to be focusing on growing our existing programs, growing our already fantastic membership, and diversifying our funding sources. We are very fortunate to have wonderful members and industry partners, all working together in harmony to make us the strong organization that we are. We have a great administrative team that works with our physician leaders to advance our programs. We want to continue what we are going well and grow in other areas.

One new area of growth I aim to develop this year is our new Educational Programming Committee. We just revised our organizational structure and created this committee under the leadership of Dr. Barbara Mathes. This is exciting for the WDS as a novel way to connect with our industry partners that are interested in developing educational content. Dr. Emily Chu will be the first Chair of that committee and I know she will do a wonderful job.

We have annual successful networking events at the national meetings including the AAD, SID, ACMS, and ASDS. This year we will host our Parade of Roses academic sessions concurrent with the EADV in Vienna, Austria. I also hope to arrange a networking event at the ASDP for the first time this fall.

### **What do you think are some challenges facing our profession?**

We face many challenges – those around our work force, reimbursements, research funding, and promotion of women. As experts in skin, hair, and nail disease, the care that we are trained to provide is exquisitely specialized, unique, and in high demand. The need for dermatology is so great, and we are faced with the challenge of how to meet that need. If we don't provide those services, we know well that people who do not have our training will try to. We all strive to improve access to care. Telemedicine, something that is very quickly changing in our current healthcare climate, is one means by which to broaden our access.

We face challenges around the need for fellowship-trained dermatopathologists and pediatric dermatologists. It is important to continue to make those fellowships and careers something that dermatology residents want to train in and pursue to take care of our patients and specialty.

The mission of WDS is to advance the personal and professional development of women dermatologists. More than half of all dermatology residents are women, yet we are nowhere near a 50/50 distribution among chairs and senior leadership. This is something that the WDS is uniquely positioned to work to address. Similarly, we continue to strive to achieve diversity in dermatology and gender pay equality, things not unique to dermatology or even medicine. Sessions such as 'Leadership Development & Negotiation' and 'Applying Negotiation Skills to Academics and other Practice Models' as taught during the WDS Forum aim to train us in these areas.

## What advice do you have for graduating residents as they prepare to start their careers?

Stay involved in WDS because we are here for you! The organization exists to support the personal and professional development of women dermatologists. Whatever comes up in your future, this is a community of women and men who support the personal and professional development of women. Take an active role in developing your network, personal and professional. Put yourself out there by introducing yourself to people who you'd like to interact and collaborate with. You'll never be sorry for stepping out of your comfort zone and having reached out.

Generally speaking, have a mindset focused on continued growth and development. Expect change and be ready for it. Do things that are going to set you up for success, including planning for retirement by saving early and maximizing your 401K match program. Think about your family planning, whatever that looks like for you, by giving yourself time to create options for yourself down the road.

## What do you like to do for fun?

Spend time with my family! Every summer, we plan a trip to some place we have never been, so we can all explore and enjoy something new together. Two years ago, we went to Australia and New Zealand, which was incredible. Another highlight was our trip to the west coast of Ireland – the beauty, people, accents, and music were unforgettable. I enjoy exercising. I have run several marathons, though I probably won't run anymore because I want to be able to run until I am 100 years old. I always have a good show or music I listen to during my work outs as a mental or physical reset. I love to cook, have parties, and have people over for dinner or brunch (or really any excuse to entertain!).