

# Future Star: Kelly Pirozzi, DPM

This podiatrist balances being a residency director and a mom.

BY MARC HASPEL, DPM



Often nominees for *Podiatry Management's* series on Future Stars fly under the radar. They quietly rise to positions of prominence within the field while also toiling in the background to better the profession. Such is the case of Kelly Pirozzi, DPM. Nominated by her colleague, Jeffrey McCallister, DPM, Dr. Pirozzi has been recently appointed to the residency director's position at the Phoenix VA Hospital. All the while, she has been active with the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons by teaching classes and heading a committee. Dr. Pirozzi recently took time to discuss her young career, preferences, and plans.

**PM:** Who in podiatric medicine influenced you the most thus far in your career? To whom else do you give thanks?

**Pirozzi:** It is difficult to name just one person who has influenced my career in foot and ankle surgery because I have taken a piece of every attending I have ever worked with into my current practice. There have been two attendings, however, who have influenced my career in teaching. Dr. Kieran Mahan and Dr. Andrew Meyr both influenced my pathway towards academia as well as fostered my appreciation for research.

**PM:** What first attracted you to a career in podiatric medicine?

**Pirozzi:** I have always had a passion for medicine in general and was drawn to podiatric medicine because of the balance of both medicine and surgery.

followed by a four-year PMSR-RRA residency program at Temple University Hospital. Residency was one of the most challenging yet rewarding times in my life.

**PM:** What are your thoughts about APMA, the certifying boards,

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**PM:** What are your goals both short term and long term for your career in podiatry?

**Pirozzi:** My short-term goal is to transition into the role of residency director and create a solid foundation for training residents. My long-term goals involve having a top-tier academic foot and ankle residency program which contributes to the body of foot and ankle research.

**PM:** What podiatry college did you attend? Where and how would you describe your post-graduate training?

**Pirozzi:** I attended Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine

and other organizations that function within the profession?

**Pirozzi:** Our profession has made large strides over the recent decades and this is only possible with the structure and teamwork of all podiatric committees, organization, and legislative bodies.

**PM:** What sub-specialties interest you in podiatry, and why?

**Pirozzi:** I favor advanced hind foot and ankle reconstruction and sports medicine; these areas pique my interest because of their complexity and challenges.

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Dr. Pirozzi (from page 119)

**PM:** What type of practice arrangement, i.e. solo, small, or large group suits you the best?

**Pirozzi:** Not one practice model is suitable for all, but over my career, I have always enjoyed being involved in

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education. An academic institution has allowed me to focus on training residents and fostering their grasp on foot and ankle surgery, while providing challenging cases and research.

**PM:** Where do you see your career being in 10 years, 20 years?

**Pirozzi:** I hope to be still training residents and performing challenging cases.

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**PM:** What are your thoughts on the overall role of podiatric medicine in the current healthcare system?

**Pirozzi:** Podiatric medicine has a stable, multi-faceted role in the healthcare system and continues to evolve as the training progresses. Some of our most challenging patients require a multi-disciplinary approach to care, and each member of the team is as important as the next.

**PM:** What should this profession do to continue to attract sound quality individuals like yourself?

**Pirozzi:** By supporting local and state podiatric societies and by being involved at the student level, this profession will continue to attract members who want to make a difference and provide top-tier care.

**PM:** Would you be in favor of a degree change as well as name change from the term “podiatric” to “foot and ankle” medicine?

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**Pirozzi:** I think that as the profession continues to evolve and change, podiatric physicians must also stay open to the possibility of a degree name change.

**PM:** If you are raising a young family, how are you managing a busy work/life balance?

**Pirozzi:** I have a four-year old daughter and a one-year old son. The work/life balance is a constant struggle, and if I am to be brutally honest, I don’t have it figured out. It does become, however, manageable with a strong support system and lots of help. I also have realized that since time is a luxury and I do not have much of it, the time I do spend with my family has to be quality time. I dedicate all my attention to them when at home. **PM**

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**Dr. Haspel** is senior editor of this magazine and past-president of the New Jersey Podiatric Medical Society. He is a member of the American Academy of Podiatric Practice Management.