

Future Star Amy Jo Marcano-Reik, DPM, PhD

Her future is already here.

BY MARC HASPEL, DPM



Rarely is being named a future star in the profession actually a misnomer. For the next candidate in this series by *Podiatry Management*, Amy Jo Marcano-Reik, DPM, this is certainly the case. As evidenced by her outstanding academic accomplishments prior to and thus far in her career, her future stardom has already arrived.

A proud graduate/alumnus of KSUCPM, Marcano-Reik holds five degrees from various academic institutions, including two doctoral degrees, a doctor of podiatric medicine, and a PhD in neuroscience. Following her residency training at University Hospitals in Cleveland, Ohio, she joined Ohio Foot and Ankle Specialists and now is pleased to provide podiatric medical and surgical care for patients in her hometown.

She has recently been recruited and appointed as the assistant director of research programs at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and Department of Biomedical Engineering, where her team just launched the Artificial Intelligence Enabling Discovery in Disease Biology (AID2B) Center. The focus and mission of the AID2B Center is to use AI and machine learning to identify biomarkers of various diseases early in the disease course and to predict patients' responses to medical and surgical treatments

to provide personalized medicine. Her research team has recently been awarded \$2.78 million from NIH/NCI and \$1.14 million from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to support its research.

In addition to her clinical and research roles, she also serves as faculty in the only online and accredited clinical research PhD program at the University of Jamestown in North Dakota, and in the undergraduate programs at Harris Stowe State University in Missouri and Baldwin Wallace and John Carroll Universities in Ohio, teaching courses in medical and health sciences, bioinformatics, statistics, clinical trials, and research design.

Lastly, she serves the profession in other capacities and roles, including as a preceptor and educator for podiatry students in her clinic, has been a regular Federal Grant Reviewer for over a decade with the United States Department of Health and Human Services and other federal agencies. She has reviewed over \$100 million dollars in multi-institutional grant applications in healthcare and medical education and has been a consultant for medical device developments and clinical trials design. She also is a published author of peer-reviewed journal articles, op-eds, and is the sole author of the book, *Brain and Spinal Cord Plasticity: An Interdisci-*

plinary and Integrative Approach for Behavior, Cognition, and Health by Nova Science Publishers.

On her home front, she serves on the PTA and as classroom parent for the Olmsted Falls City school district, serves as a member of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Committee to support and reward positive student behavior, regularly volunteers for career day and other educational and health-oriented events, while supporting and sponsoring youth clubs and athletic sports teams. Finally, she is a Girl Scouts Troop Leader for the Olmsted Falls 3rd and 4th grade girls.

She truly believes in the values, mission, and importance of serving others and says she is grateful and always thankful for opportunities to give back and support future generations.

Doctor Marcano-Reik recently took a few moments from her busy schedule to discuss her already spectacular career and prospects for her future in podiatric medicine.

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

Marcano-Reik: My first introduction to podiatric medicine as a potential career was during a shadowing experience with Dr. Joseph Bartal at

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Southwest General Health Center in my hometown during my pre-medical/post-baccalaureate education. I will never forget Dr. Bartal's gracious support and patience during my first time observing patient care, both in the clinic and in the operating room. The shadowing experience was instrumental in my decision to pursue podiatry. During my podiatric medical education at Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine, Dr.

next generation. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my family, friends, and colleagues for their unwavering support.

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

Marcano-Reik: I have a unique non-traditional journey and background; I received my PhD in Neuroscience from the University of Iowa many years before applying to KSUCPM. My genuine interests

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Mark Hardy and Dr. Scott Spencer were supportive and influential in my education. I learned many pearls relevant for treating patients and furthering the profession through research, collaboration, and innovation during lecture and patient care experiences.

As a resident at University Hospitals, I was most directly influenced and impacted by Dr. Michael Canales. While on rotation with Dr. Canales, I not only learned how to develop specialized care as a new podiatric physician, but I also learned and strengthened skills in treating patients comprehensively and in an integrated manner as part of the patient's multi-professional care team. Dr. Canales treats patients with honor, dignity, and integrity, and is a gifted podiatric physician and mentor/teacher, who cares about others' education and professional journeys.

I am thankful for the mentorship I have received throughout my education and training, and I am fortunate to have received support and guidance from many other influential individuals including Dr. Allan Boike, Dr. Tim Whittingham, and Dr. Lee Kirksey of Cleveland Clinic Vascular Surgery. I have learned a great deal from each of these individuals, and many others not listed, which directly impacts the ways in which I provide patient care and contribute to education and guidance for the

and research, ever since my undergraduate studies at Baldwin-Wallace College, were focused on central and peripheral nervous system processes associated with movement and recovery of function after injury or surgery. After completing my post-doctoral training at Cleveland Clinic and Case Western Reserve University in Bioethics, Neurology, and Genomics, I joined Case Western as associate staff in the Neurological and Behavioral Outcomes Center examining differentiation of diagnostic criteria via imaging and clinical biomarkers for neurodegenerative conditions, including Parkinson's disease. It was during this experience, working with patients in a clinical research capacity, that I discovered I aspired to also provide care for patients diagnosed with the conditions I was researching. It was during that time that I discovered podiatric medicine during a shadowing experience, which I immediately realized was the perfect intersection of my passions and interests.

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

Marcano-Reik: My short-term goals for my career are to intersect the central and peripheral nervous systems with my "head-to-toe"

perspective for patient care, both through clinical practice and clinical research. I aim to illuminate the ways in which the brain, spinal cord, and lower extremities are intricately connected, while examining novel and integrated treatments. In addition, over the next few years, I plan to publish my second book with a focused approach on neurology and podiatry relevant for patient care. My long-term career goals in podiatric medicine include continuing to develop my leadership skills to support future generations' didactic and clinical training as well as collegial collaborative opportunities. I also look forward to contributing to ongoing and future research efforts in podiatry to support innovative developments that advance the field of podiatric medicine and impact on the overall healthcare landscape.

PM: *What College of Podiatric Medicine did you attend? Where, and how would you describe your post-graduate training?*

Marcano-Reik: I am a very proud alumnus of Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine in Independence, Ohio in Northeast Ohio, where I was born and raised. The moment I stepped on KSUCPM's campus for a tour and informational session, I knew I was at a very special place. The education, training, and support I received while at KSUCPM were unparalleled and truly prepared me for the pathway to become an independent podiatric physician. My post-graduate residency training was completed at University Hospitals in Northeast Ohio. During my residency training, I was fortunate to learn from some of the most skillful, talented, and compassionate podiatrists in the area. I also learned about the unique and important role of podiatrists in the patients' multi-professional, collaborative care teams. I am proud to have completed my education and training in my hometown; providing care for my community is truly an honor.

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

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and other organizations that function within the profession?

Marcano-Reik: The APMA, certifying boards, and other organizations within the profession are essential in supporting podiatrists and trainees throughout their journeys, including through advocacy and education. These organizations represent our profession in important ways and positively impact awareness associated with podiatry, scope and practice, continuing education, growth of the profession, and more. I support these organizations and look forward to continued opportunities for involvement.

PM: What sub-specialties interest you in podiatric medicine, and why?

Marcano-Reik: The sub-specialty that I am most interested in, because

of my background and PhD in the neurosciences, is podiatric neurology. I have always viewed podiatric conditions from a central-and-peripheral nervous system perspective, appreciating the ways in which the processes of the brain, spinal cord, and lower extremities intersect and influence one another during movement and recovery processes. I have recently had the honor to present my research in this area to several pre-podiatry and pre-medical societies at institutions including Dr. William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine at the Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science, Des Moines University College of Podiatric Medicine and Surgery, and other institutions. I am also currently a faculty member at the University of Jamestown-North Dakota for the Clinical Research PhD Program and serve as a PhD committee member and advisor for student research in this area to positively impact patients' quality of life.

As a former athlete and collegiate cheerleader and competitive dance team member, I am also interested in biomechanics and sports medicine. I treat many athletes in Northeast Ohio to keep them healthy and allowing them to return to full activity.

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

Marcano-Reik: I am currently practicing and providing patient care as part of a group. I have had training experiences in diverse practice types and enjoyed each type for various reasons. As far as type of practice arrangement that suits me best: as long as comprehensive, compassionate, and quality patient-directed care are the focus, then I am happy. It is also important to me to have opportunities to engage with colleagues in a professional manner to foster inno-

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vative developments for patient care, whether through the practice directly or other collaborative arrangements.

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

Marcano-Reik: In 10 years, I aim to continue advancement in the areas that I am committed to: patient care, education, collaborative research, and service. It is my hope to be engaged, more formally, in podiatric medical education to support future generations, as well as research efforts to contribute to patient care and treatment developments. In 20 years, I aspire to engage in leadership opportunities to contribute to growth and sustainability of podiatric medicine as a profession through society- and policy-based opportunities. As I progress in my career journey over the next few decades, I will continue to seek out and surround myself with supportive mentors in the field to learn skills, experiences, and pearls from the many leaders who are paving the way for the rest of us today.

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

Marcano-Reik: Podiatric medicine is essential to patient care and the healthcare system. Podiatrists are uniquely qualified to identify and address problems that affect the lower extremities relevant for overall health. Podiatrists diagnose conditions, and are often the first to detect symptoms associated with chronic conditions including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and many other conditions. As key providers and members of the patient's multi-professional healthcare team, podiatrists are uniquely poised to prevent complications from chronic conditions, improve quality of life, and positively impact the healthcare system (through limb salvage, preventing hospitalizations, and more).

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

Marcano-Reik: Regarding recruitment efforts, I think the podiatric medical profession should continue to disseminate findings and discoveries widely, including at conferences and symposia, to share about the profession and engage with diverse communities. I encourage fellow podiatrists to collaborate through research with other podiatrists and medical professionals to foster inter- and multi-professional interactions that contribute to patient care and healthcare. In addition, the positive impact afforded by community outreach cannot be emphasized enough. I am honored each year to

message, my practice, and medical and teaching philosophies remain unchanged. As with other medical professions, institutes, and academies, the organizational and governance structure, professional collaborative opportunities, educational initiatives, and sustainability should be the focus during considerations.

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

Marcano-Reik: I am raising a family and am the proud mother to my 12-year-old son, Evan, and 9-year-old

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present and share about podiatry to my son's and daughter's schools, in the Olmsted Falls school district, and our community during Career Day and other events. Whether podiatrists are presenting about the profession to elementary school-aged students, or other groups, I think podiatrists should embrace every opportunity to share about podiatry.

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

Marcano-Reik: This profession has a lot to offer, and the unique and specialized podiatric skills and practice are conducive to the degree awarded. Regarding a potential name change from “podiatric” to “foot and ankle” medicine, I think the goals remain the same for both descriptors: the scope, integrity, and specialized representation of our profession in medicine. I, personally, have referred to and introduced myself as a podiatrist, foot and ankle specialist, podiatric physician, and doctor of podiatric medicine. Often, it is based on the audience; regardless of the name, the

daughter, Morgan. My husband and I met in college and have been married for over twenty years. Anyone who knows me knows that my family means the world to me. I completed my PhD prior to starting our family and, as a committed lifelong learner, decided to continue my education during pre-med/post-baccalaureate studies and podiatry school when my son was an infant, and we were expecting our daughter. My children are active in academic, extra-curricular, and sports activities, and I am fortunate to be able to be there for them and support them while also balancing my career. I am committed to balancing a full and very fulfilling professional life and family life, and I strongly believe that balance, wellness, and happiness in both spheres positively impacts the other. **PM**



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.