

# Future Star Zack Hill, DPM

Meet this  
forward-looking and accomplished  
podiatrist.

BY MARC HASPEL, DPM



Sometimes future talent is recognized early and is unmistakable. Early impressions can often be excellent prognosticators of future success. Such is the case of the next candidate for *Podiatry Management's* series Future Stars in Podiatric Medicine, Zack Hill, DPM. Nominated by Robert Mendicino, DPM of Ohio, Dr. Hill has been identified early in his career as an excellent speaker, having excellent surgical skills, having already been outstanding via research and numerous published papers. Mendicino compares Hill to those who he has trained in the past before him, several of whom have gone on to serve as presidents of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons.

Dr. Hill recently graduated his fellowship training in Indiana, and will be joining Southeastern Medical Center in Cambridge, OH. Hill recently took a few moments to reflect on his young career thus far, and his feelings towards his 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?*

**Hill:** I have many people to thank for helping me reach where I am today. I consider myself incred-

ibly fortunate to have had the support of a handful of mentors whom I regularly turn to and who have significantly shaped my career thus far. First and foremost, I am grateful to Dr. Mendicino. As my previous residency director, he has been my greatest influence in this field and a significant presence in my life. Hav-

ileged to continue working closely with them, enriching the educational experience of other podiatric students through our shared efforts with S.T.E.P.S. (Student Transatlantic Education in Podiatric Surgery).

Finally, I would be remiss not to extend my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to my fellowship faculty,

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ing someone so instrumental in our specialty in my corner is a blessing. I am deeply thankful to him.

I also want to acknowledge Dr. Timothy Holmes and Dr. Ian Barron, who were faculty members during my residency. Both have served as guiding lights, helping me carve my path forward and providing me with invaluable mentorship. All three of these gentlemen are not only exceptional surgeons but are even better people. Additionally, I owe much gratitude to Dr. Mark Razzante, Dr. Christina Pratt, and Dr. Coleman Clougherty. These outstanding physicians played a pivotal role in my early education, and I am priv-

who have supported my growth both professionally and personally: Drs. J. Michael Miller, Douglas Blackledge, Brian Elliott, William Adams, Scott Hoffman, Andrew Kapsalis, Colin Blackburn, and Kalen Farr. I am humbled by the generosity and wisdom of such a helpful network.

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

**Hill:** I was introduced to the profession by a dear family friend and my junior high football coach, Dr. David Skrobot. Having the opportunity to shadow him in his clinic

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showed me first-hand the impact this field can have on the day-to-day health of patients. The ability to have a clinical and surgical practice, with a wide variety of pathology, was a large draw to the profession. He has made a large impact in the community I grew up in and I can only hope to emulate his example.

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

**Hill:** In the short term, my goal is to secure a job following the comple-

tion of my fellowship training. With this, I aspire to serve the community where I work, becoming a trusted partner and making a lasting impact on my patients' lives. I aim to be a leader in our field and to continue advancing the profession in a positive and meaningful way.

lumbus, OH. Under the guidance of Mendicino and many other esteemed surgeons, I received top-tier surgical and clinical training. I had the opportunity to work alongside world-class physicians not only in our specialty, but in other disciplines as well, including general surgery, plastic surgery, vascular surgery, and orthopedic trauma. This experience exposed me to a diverse range of clinical and surgical pathology, equipping me to pursue more advanced training in my fellowship year at the Indy Foot and Ankle Reconstructive Fellowship in Indianapolis, IN. The training I've received in my fellowship has further refined and reinforced my clinical

keep its best interests in mind. That said, continued growth and improvement are always possible. It can be disheartening at times to observe a perceived "divide" within the profession, which may stem from having multiple governing boards. Greater unity could position it to achieve even more in terms of recognition and parity within healthcare. While I don't claim to have all the answers, I believe there should be healthy, ongoing discussions on this issue to pave the way toward greater unity. As my career progresses, I hope to contribute constructively to these conversations and work towards a stronger, more cohesive profession.

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

**Hill:** I have a deep passion for reconstructive foot and ankle surgery. This area of the field often requires in-depth, intricate, and innovative thinking to address complex and debilitating patient issues. Having the training and ability to provide these solutions for patients who struggle daily is a blessing, and I am deeply grateful to those who have equipped me with these skills. Additionally, I have a strong interest in the sports medicine aspect of this field. As a former athlete, it brings me great joy to help people get back to the activities they love. Sports are an integral part of the fabric of our society, and I know firsthand the profound impact they can have. I wouldn't be where I am today if it weren't for the lessons I learned and the bonds I formed through sports. Ensuring that patients of all ages have the opportunity to experience those same benefits throughout their lives is a key driver in my work.

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

**Hill:** That is a great question. As I am in the early part of my career; the jury is still out. I am, however, very much a people person. I feed off the energy of others and am very team-oriented. If I had to choose, I

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tion of my fellowship training. With this, I aspire to serve the community where I work, becoming a trusted partner and making a lasting impact on my patients' lives. I aim to be a leader in our field and to continue advancing the profession in a positive and meaningful way.

I have been fortunate to train with many impactful physicians who have contributed greatly to this profession. I hope to honor their efforts by committing myself to leaving this field better than I found it.

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

**Hill:** I was fortunate to have studied at Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine (KSUCPM). Living in Cleveland, and attending KSUCPM, provided me with a solid foundation for my future in this field, leaving me well-prepared for the rigors of residency training. After completing my four years at KSUCPM, I had the privilege of training at Grant Medical Center, a Level 1 trauma center in Co-

and surgical approach, enabling me to provide the highest level of care for my patients. Every step of the way has been life-changing in such a positive way. For that, I am thankful.

**PM:** *What are your thoughts about APMA, the certifying boards, and other organizations that function within the profession?*

**Hill:** This profession owes a great deal of gratitude to the APMA. The advocacy it provides on behalf of this profession is invaluable, and the profession certainly wouldn't be where it is today without its efforts. It is always inspiring to see such talented and dedicated individuals championing our cause each day, especially in a complex and often challenging healthcare environment. The same appreciation extends to our other governing bodies, such as ABFAS and ABPM. Their commitment to upholding the integrity of this profession is crucial, and while the work often goes unnoticed, it is deeply appreciated. These organizations play a fundamental role in ensuring the continued success of the field and always

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would choose to work as part of a small team. For me, this ensures that I am always doing my best to uphold the standards of the group and the hopes and goals of not just myself, but others as well.

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

**Hill:** Wherever this profession takes me, I hope, first and foremost, that I am an integrated and trusted leader in the community in which I work. The goals are the same whether it's 5, 10, or 20 years down the road, i.e., to serve those who are in need. I want to surround myself with colleagues, co-workers, and patients who push me every day to be the best physician and patient advocate I can be. I hope to never stay stagnant and complacent in what I do.

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

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**Hill:** This field is critical to the healthcare landscape and plays a pivotal role in delivering comprehensive patient care. I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact podiatrists can make in both hospital and clinic settings when their expertise is fully utilized. As specialists and experts in foot and ankle care, podiatrists are entrusted with responsibilities ranging from limb preservation to complex reconstructive surgeries, addressing a wide spectrum of conditions. Like any specialty, podiatrists must continually strive for excellence and hold themselves to the highest standards. By doing so, they cannot only advance this profession, but also solidify their position as essential contributors within the healthcare system, ensuring the continued opportunity to serve patients.

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

**Hill:** I believe early outreach is key. I know the profession's governing boards and colleges have really been ramping up efforts to reach prospec-

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tive students earlier and with more frequency. I am so hopeful to see these changes. When folks can see the impact podiatrists can have, that is life-altering and shows this field is worth pursuing now and for years to come. I am also a strong believer that one should be the change one wants to see. I hope to be in a position, one day, to be involved in student/resident and/or fellowship training and education and to lead by example. I hope I can be a strong role

change. Adding “Foot and Ankle” to the designation or degree could better communicate our comprehensive expertise to the broader healthcare community.

That said, what truly matters is not the title itself, but rather the caliber of those who bear it. Upholding the integrity of the profession is par-

amount, regardless of the name that is chosen in order to move forward. Being adaptable and open to change will allow the profession to continue advancing and solidifying its role within the healthcare landscape.

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

**Hill:** To me, this is the ultimate goal. I am fortunate enough to come from parents who have enabled me to live the life I live and set me up for success. To be able to pay this forward to my future children, God willing, is what I look forward to doing the most. I owe everything I have to my parents, wife Ashley, family, and friends. I am very passionate about my work and becoming the best podiatric surgeon I can be, but I am that much more passionate about being a good father someday, a good husband, son, and friend. Certainly, these things will be challenging to juggle as I move forward, but I will always do right by my family and make the necessary sacrifices for them. I can't wait to build a career all while continually working on building a great homelife and family. **PM**

model and voice of reason for those in training, as many have done for me.

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

**Hill:** Podiatrists should be proud to call themselves podiatrists. Understanding the history of this profession and appreciating how far it has come are essential. Many distinguished physicians who have come before have held the title of podiatrist, paving the way for the progress seen today. While it's important to honor the roots of this profession, doctors of podiatric medicine must also look toward the future. As the role of podiatrists evolve and the scope of practice expands, it may be worthwhile to consider a terminology



**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.