

Debra Doubek, MD named 2013 Kansas Family Physician of the Year – follows in her father's footsteps



Left: Dr. Debra Doubek (middle) with her loving parents, Herb Doubek, MD (left) and Lou Doubek (right).

Twenty-one years ago, KAFP congratulated Herb Doubek, MD (Belleville) as the 1992 Kansas Family Physician of the Year. Today, it is his daughter, Debra Doubek, MD (Manhattan) who we have proudly selected as our 2013 Kansas Family Physician of the Year winner. This is the first time in KAFP history this has happened – parent and offspring are both Kansas FPOY recipients!

Dr. Debra Doubek was born and raised in Belleville, Kan., a small town, with lots of exposure to family medicine. "I was born in the early morning of July 4, 1958, in an un-air conditioned, hot hospital with the windows wide open. My mother awoke to the sound of fire crackers popping in the neighborhoods surrounding our local hospital. Fortunately for me, my mother, even in her compromised post-partum state, had an outstanding aim with the fly swatter, so that I didn't succumb to any fly-born illnesses as the flies swarmed around and on me. Unfortunately, her fly swatting abilities improved even more as I grew into my preschool years, as the fly swatter was her favorite form of discipline when we kids became unruly. I grew up the middle child in a very happy, active, rural household. My parents' roots in the United States originate in Kansas from Barber and Pratt County, where my mother and father were sweethearts at the local high school, and eventually married. I would spend summers on a several thousand acre farm, riding horses for hours through pastures and down gravel



roads; feeding bottle lambs; helping feed the cattle; and catching minnows in the creek. The most frequent warning I would hear as I left the farm house was 'Don't get bitten by a water moccasin', as if I knew what one looked like."

She still keeps her parents close – Dr. Herb and Lou Doubek reside in Belleville. There was no shortage of primary care doctors with her dad and EJ Chaney, MD, who delivered her. She says, "I grew up with these people. I'm a caretaker so I knew I wanted to do something in the medical field." Carolyn Gaughan can attest to the fact that she did grow up not only in medicine but exposed to KAFP earlier than most, she recalls, "When we first met, Dr. Doubek was on faculty at KU and had brought her baby (oldest son, Nathan) with her to the board meeting. Nathan is now 24 years old!"

Upon graduating from Belleville High School as class salutatorian, she went on to college at Dana College in Blair, NE, where she met her husband-to-be, Tom Phillips. She then spent 10 years at the KU Medical Center in

Kansas City in training, residency, fellowship, and as assistant clinical professor in the Department of Family Medicine. Since then, she has practiced as a family physician in private practice in Manhattan for the past 21 years. In addition to a busy practice, she was instrumental in starting Mercy LIGHT (Lose Inches to Gain Healthier Tomorrows) a weight loss program at Mercy Regional Health Center and has been involved in its sustained viability since 2006. Dr. Doubek is very proud that their practice promotes health and fitness with an emphasis on fitness and bariatric medicine. She and some staff members are preparing for the 44 mile relay, 'Brew to Brew,' which is a fundraiser for Cystic Fibrosis. One of her sons shares her passion for running and will be alongside her. "We are always seeking ways to promote fitness in our practice," she says. In addition to running, she enjoys her book club, cooking, and gardening.

Dr. Doubek talks about her dad and it's apparent he is a great role model. "My father is a family physician, and he was the all-encompassing rural doctor who did everything when he set up practice in Belleville in 1957, the year before I was born. There were 4 physicians in the entire county, so dad delivered thousands of the babies in the county over his 30 years of practice

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there, performed many of the surgeries in the county, was the county coroner for 30 years, was a school board member for 12 years, was the school sports physician, and was and is still very active in the Lutheran Church. We had many KU medical students and Wesley Family Practice residents rotate through Belleville, as my father and his partner, Dr. Ernie Jo Chaney were very active in teaching. While in practice, my father never filed for a Medicaid number. The number of Medicaid patients in Republic County was very low, and Herb would take care of them for free. People watched out for one another in our town."

And so it is no surprise that Dr. Herb Doubek was the 1992 recipient of the



The team! Dr. Doubek gives credit to her team for the Kansas Family Physician of the Year award. L to R: Christine Hallauer, Sarah Leland, Deb Doubek, MD, Diane Reddig, Donna Rundquist, LPN and Moni Lauer.

Kansas Family Physician of the Year award. His inspiration as an outstanding family physician role model, maintaining high professional standards and high quality, family-centered continuing health care has been passed along to his daughter. Another important role model was Dr. EJ Chaney who practiced in her hometown of Belleville with her dad and also served in various KAFP roles. Dr. Doubek found it helpful to have female role models and credits Drs. Becky Ruble and Mary Redmon.

One trait that patients appreciate about Dr. Doubek is her friendly demeanor and sense of humor, which puts everyone at ease. A patient with many stories and compliments highlights some most

memorable interactions with Dr. Doubek: Once his mother was visiting from San Antonio and became ill and he was grateful for Dr. Doubek making her feel comfortable. Following the appointment, his mother inquired about cost, to which Dr. Doubek replied, "Anyone on their vacation shouldn't have to worry about a bill." At a later date, his daughter had miscarried and Dr. Doubek returned a late night call giving detailed medical instructions while providing comfort. They describe Dr. Doubek's compassion, stating "She seems to hurt when we are hurting and never lets us leave the office until all questions are answered." He also recalls going in for a small procedure and being very hungry. When

she heard about it, Dr. Doubek went to her lunch bag and brought him some grapes to eat while she finished the procedure! Those stories give some insight to her compassion and generosity.

"She is a provider of physician and emotional care," says President and CEO Mercy Regional Health Center, John R. Broberg, FACHE. Mr. Broberg points out that in 2012 she was ranked 99th percentile for patient satisfaction by her hospital inpatients – wow!

Dr. Doubek finds time to give to organizations she cares about. Student Mobilization is a nonprofit student organization on campus at Kansas State

FOUR DEMANDS OF A LEADER

1. Purpose, Direction, and Meaning.

The leader's purpose must be to galvanize, energize, and enthrall people to give their work meaning and resonance. The purpose has to belong to everyone in the organization. The leader must have clear goals, and communicate these goals in such a way that ownership is created on every level and in every corner of the operation.

2. Trust.

Leaders must generate and sustain trust. Trust is the social glue that binds commitment and promotes action to produce results. Without it, you can't win. To trust leaders, to have confidence in them we need to experience their competence.

3. Optimism

Leaders need to be purveyors of hope. Their optimism fascinates others because it is so pervasive and powerful. Most good leaders do not get stuck on their mistakes, problems, wrong turns or mishaps. They see their errors as opportunities to learn and change. They do not fear failure. They might refer to failure as a "mistake," a "glitch," a "miscue," a "false start," or a misdirection." They stay away from the word "failure" because to most leaders it connotes something that is terminal and lifeless.

4. Action and Results

The last demand that we want from a leader is a commitment to action. That is, leaders have the capacity to convert purpose and vision into action. It isn't enough just to have a great vision—it has to become manifest and real in some external way and produce results. Most leaders are pragmatic dreamers and practical idealists. They step up and take their shots every day, knowing that, as hockey player Wayne Gretzky once said "You miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take."

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scope of practice and threats to public health are only a few that we will need to address to reach our goals.

So how does the KAFP stay on course to get where we ultimately want to go? First, and foremost our patients and communities serve as a compass to help us navigate whatever challenges may lie ahead. Equally important, however, the KAFP needs the right leaders to help the organization continue along its way, refining and redefining what the end goals should be.

As the young medical student dreaming of a career in pathology in Steeler country I didn't know what family medicine was and I never would have guessed at the joy that I would expe-

rience once I found my niche practicing family medicine in the Midwest. Having wise counsel ensured that as a medical student I developed to my fullest potential, even though it meant taking into account possibilities I had never before imagined. That is what I want for the KAFP—to achieve all of the goals that are right for our organization by focusing on our long-term planning to date and also, on occasion, taking into account all of the possibilities yet unimagined.

When the nominating committee approached me about running for secretary, I was humbled and honored (and, if I'm being honest with you, a little surprised because it was so unexpected). I agreed to run because I want to be part of shaping the future of the KAFP and family medicine in Kansas.

I have thoroughly enjoyed serving as co-chair of the Professional Development Committee and on the Kansas Academy of Family Physicians Foundation Board of Trustees. These roles have taught me much about the KAFP and the challenges that family physicians face across Kansas. My past leadership experiences have given me the skills necessary to be an effective leader for the organization, and I would be thrilled to put these skills to work for you.

No matter what lies around the next curve in the road for the KAFP I hope that I can be part of the journey, whether urging us forward on our pre-planned route or as a voice that causes us to consider a different direction on occasion. Thank you for supporting my candidacy.

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University, focusing on spiritual leadership and character development. Dr. Doubek provides moral and financial contributions to help college students grow their faith in God. She helps feed the spiritual hunger of these young people! "Something I truly admire about Dr. Doubek is that she desires to serve a purpose greater than herself," said Kara Bowman, campus minister of Student Mobilization.

Flint Hills Community Clinic is Manhattan's free clinic serving the uninsured. It has significantly benefited from Dr. Doubek's caring hand, as she helped found the clinic in 2006. The clinic has provided more than 7,000 free appointments in the last 5 years. Dr. Doubek not only treats patients – she also advocates for them, facilitating their referrals and finding needed medications and medical supplies. In 2010, the Medical Director left on sabbatical and Dr. Doubek essentially took the role of Acting Medical Director, providing major assistance to the clinical coordinator until the Medical Director's return. Dr. Doubek mentors medical students and allows pre-med students to shadow her at the community clinic, showing them the value of giving back.

Dr. Doubek is a preceptor for Wichita physician assistant students and currently has a nurse practitioner from Ft. Hays in the office. She has been involved in KAFP's Faces in



The day Dr. Doubek was interviewed for this article was also the 85th birthday of dear friend, Dr. Verlyn Steinkruger – so of course she helped him celebrate!

Family Medicine 2.0 project, hosting the Manhattan dinner this fall and contributing to a successful K State program in many ways.

She serves on the board at Flint Hills Community Clinic as well as various boards and committees at the hospital including Chair of the Pharmacy Committee, the Utilization Review Committee, Chair of the Medicine Department, and a member of the Executive Board at the Hospital.

She is a past president of Kansas Medical Society (KMS) and currently serves as a Counselor for KMS for her district. She is a KAFP district 5 director candidate and volunteer for the KAFP's Family Doctor of the Day program. In fact, the day of the interview, she was looking forward to her trip to Topeka to serve the next day, and she was taking her dad along with her.

Dr. Debra Doubek and her husband

Tom Phillips, have two sons Nathan (24 years old) and Neil (21 years old), who are both interested in medicine. Nathan is completing a master's degree in Health Care Administration. Neil is a junior at KU and will take his MCATs soon. She also has other family members who are in medicine. A word of advice to young people, either in medicine or hoping to go into medicine? She says, "Have hope in the future of medicine. We do a lot of good things. People will always need medical care. We will always need well-trained, smart, compassionate physicians caring for patients every day. There is a lot of job security in family medicine."

Dr. Doubek believes that being a family physician means being a good leader. "Psychologists estimate that the average person makes fifteen thousand choices or decisions in the average day. I hope, in looking back over my days, that my choices and decisions exemplify the four demands of a leader (see side bar), and that my patients feel they have a competent, caring, trustful, and optimistic physician pulling for them every day in the office."

"I am honored to receive this award. And this award is not about me, it's about my practice. I can't do any of this on my own. My practice, my nurses, my community are the heroes," Dr. Doubek concludes.