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How did you select transplant surgery as your specialty?

Transplant was not on my list of career choices. In medical school my initial interest was pediatric surgery because of my experiences with Dr. Philip Glick, a pediatric surgeon. I was paired with Dr. Glick after my first year when I received a research scholarship. He created an environment that combined clinical care and research to try and answer challenging clinical scenarios.

When I went to residency my interest continued and I spent time in Dr. Robert Cilley's lab, who was also a pediatric surgeon. After returning to the wards, I met the new transplant surgeon from Stanford, Dr. Ed Alfrey, and that is where my exposure to the field of transplantation first occurred. This was a great experience. We discussed that in transplant I could work with both adults and kids. He created this environment where I was like, *"Oh my God, this is exactly what I want to do. I want to sort of be like this person."* Through his mentorship and sponsorship, I was able to match in the transplant fellowship at the University of Washington.

When I started applying for fellowships, I looked at places that had strong pediatric transplant programs. It turned out the University of Washington/Seattle Children's Hospital (SCH) was one of those places. I applied to fellowship here and it's the only place I interviewed, not because I didn't get other interviews, but once I interviewed and they offered me to spot I cancelled everything else.

When I came to SCH, I was walking in the hallways by Department of Surgery and I saw Phillip Glick's picture. I didn't realize he was a fellow here at SCH. It felt like I was destined to be in Seattle - I had Seattle connections even before I even got here.

Tell us about your most memorable patient/surgery.

That's a tough one. They're all memorable to me. I think one of the most memorable surgeries was in a child who presented with acute liver failure and weighed four kilos. I mean, literally he could almost fit in the palm of your hand. It was amazing that we were able to do the liver transplant, and for me, that was a huge highlight to see how far advances in surgical technique have come - that you're able to perform a transplant in a child weighing four kilos. There's not a lot of people in the country, or the world, that can do these operations. I have to say, I've been fortunate and blessed to be able to do that and bring joy back to patients and families that we serve during their most challenging times.

I'm often still amazed that this actually works <laughs>. You can take an organ from someone and put it in someone else and mitigate the immunologic barriers. You put it in, and it works right away. You can see a child that's jaundiced from liver disease, and within 48 hours post liver transplant, they aren't jaundiced anymore. Their skin is clearing up and they're totally different. Or a child who's been on dialysis three times a week or every day, based on their dialysis modality, and they can't do what a normal child does. They can't take part

in regular activities most children take for granted. It interrupts their growth and development, education and their family lives. Post kidney transplant and they're totally a new person. They can do whatever they want to, they can eat, drink as much as they want and get a second chance to live a normal life. It's pretty amazing.

What's the best career advice you've ever received?

The best career advice I've ever received is never let anyone define what success looks like for you. You always have to define your own success. Success is an individual thing. Oftentimes, people try to say, *"This is the only path. This is the only way to go,"* and that might be for them. You have to decide, what is your true north. What are you trying to accomplish and what impact are you trying to make? At the end of the day when you are looking in the mirror, there's only one person will be looking back in the mirror that can answer, did this work or not. Never limit yourself to one thing, always keep your eyes open to opportunities. You never know what may come your way.

Switching gears to COVID. How has your practice and life changed since the pandemic started?

From a professional standpoint, transplant never stopped. It may have slowed down, but it never stopped. We kept doing transplants unlike other places in the country like in New York where they were completely overwhelmed and had to divert their resources to care for patients who had COVID-19.



Dr. Dick with his wife, Dr. Anita Tiwari

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On the personal side, things definitely changed. I have two children, a six and an eight-year-old, and I never fully appreciated teachers and nannies. You realize they are a critical part of your life, especially if you don't have any family nearby. You need a village for all this to work. The personal part was very challenging as my wife is also a physician who is very busy. I think one of the other things COVID taught me is to be very intentional in how and with whom I spend my time. Don't waste time on noise but focus on the signal. It's a reminder that life is short and if you don't focus on the things or people that matter the most, once it or they are gone, there's a permanence to it.



Dr. Dick's children, Kiran (8) and Sejal (6)

What is something you've accomplished in the last year that you were most proud of?

I've become the first Black faculty member in the Department of Surgery that's a full professor. That's pretty significant for me, as well as being the first Black surgeon-in-chief at SCH. I think there are four Black surgeon-in-chiefs at major children's hospital in the country right now. The reason why that's a major accomplishment, not just for me personally, but to me, is this serves as an opportunity for people who don't think they can be what they can't see. Someone behind me is going to look and say, "Hey, that's a possibility for me." A person of color who never thought that this is something that they could do, may now aspire to do so and I hope will aspire to do even greater things. This is way bigger than me, and I'm hoping it has a way bigger impact beyond me.

What are you known for professionally or personally?

From a professional standpoint, I hope people would say I'm a person that will always try to do the right thing. I always try to see how I can create opportunities for people behind and around me to succeed. I think that's one measure of my success—how I help someone else be the best person they can be. Surround yourself with accessible brilliance.

On a personal note, I'd say I'm a good friend. I'm always there to support people and I put a lot of emphasis on developing strong bonds and relationships. I think in life, if you want to go far, you've got to go together.

rapid fire

What is the last book you read?

The Fire Next Time by James Baldwin. If you ever have the opportunity, it's a pretty amazing book.

What TV show are you watching now?

My wife started watching *Madam Secretary*. It was pretty good to see how the main actor handles her staff and navigates these challenging situations and how she puts a lot of emphasis on loyalty and taking care of her own and sort of leading from the front, not necessarily from behind all the time.

What is your go-to snack?

I grew up in Jamaica and it's called "bun and cheese." It's a cinnamon type of pastry you warm up, slice it, put some cheese in between and you eat it. I get it through Amazon because I can't really get Jamaican stuff here, but every so often I try to order it and try to keep it away from my son, because he loves that too <laughs>.

What's your favorite guilty pleasure?

I think COVID has changed a lot of things for me and I just enjoy hanging out with my family and friends and having people come over. See how people are doing, see how things are going in their lives. That brings a lot of pleasure to me.

When are you the most productive?

I try to get stuff done in the morning so that by the time I get home I can actually spend some time with my wife and kids.

Who's your inspiration and why?

My inspiration is my mom. I grew up in a single-parent home and she made significant sacrifices for me to be where I am today. I say this to my close friends and probably need to say more to my mom - anything that I've achieved her name should also be on it, because if she didn't make those sacrifices there's no way I'd be where I am today.

If a movie was made about your life, who would you want to play you?

<Laugh> I want to say Denzel Washington but I'll say Sidney Poitier. He wrote a book called *The Measure of a Man*, and if you get a chance, read it too. He was able to break through significant barriers and oftentimes as I follow his life, I think about myself and some of the things I've gone through, and I see the difference that he's ultimately made in people's life. And so he'd be the one - Sidney Poitier.

What was your last impulse buy?

I don't like shopping <laughs>, so I'm trying to think. I, against my wife's advice and better judgement, bought two iPads for my children. They're always fighting over the iPads and I said, "Hey, you know what? I've got to get you each your own iPad." I think kids are learning a lot differently than how I did growing up. iPads have pencils that they can use to do all this homework—there's all these educational applications. I'd say that's my last impulse buy. I try not to spend money on material things per se, but spend money on experiences that are lifelong and priceless, like travelling. I do like to travel and experience different places and learn about new people and new cultures. I want my children to have the travel bug. See and experience new things that will help shape them to be good citizens of the world.

What is your most memorable vacation?

I would say one of the most memorable vacations was before we had kids. We hiked the trails of Machu Picchu. We booked this trip through this company called Mountain Lodges of Peru. My wife was like, "Oh, it's an easy hike. You don't have to worry about anything. You just show up and enjoy." I did enjoy it, but it wasn't easy hike. I was always in the back and I think they had to deploy a guide just for me. I was totally out of shape and not prepared. It was amazing to hike every day through Peru and see, as you go from one place to the next, the change in the terrain, the change in the food, the change in the local culture. It's like even within the country, there's these different cultures.

And then to end that at Machu Picchu. How did they create this majestic city in the clouds? <laughs> It was just out of nowhere—the clouds parted and you see this amazing city. That was a pretty amazing trip. I've got to do it again, but this time I'm going to be prepared.



Dr. Dick and family on another memorable vacation at the National Elk Refuge in Jackson Hole, WY

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PROFESSOR

DIVISION OF
GENERAL SURGERY



In April Dr. [Claire Buchanan](#) joined the breast team at UW Medical Center - Northwest and Seattle Care Cancer Alliance. Dr. Buchanan has lived in the Seattle area since 2005, and worked at the True Family Women's Cancer Center at the Swedish Cancer Institute before joining UW. After completing her undergraduate degree at the University of Chicago, she stayed for her medical degree at the University's Pritzker School of Medicine. Dr. Buchanan completed her general surgery residency at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and during this time she developed an interest in caring for breast cancer patients, and enjoyed the collaborative and multidisciplinary nature of the speciality. Encouraged by her teachers in residency, she spent a year at the University of Southern California doing clinical research with Dr. Melvin Silverstein, an expert in ductal carcinoma in situ. An amazing mentor and surgeon, Dr. Silverstein guided Dr. Buchanan to seek breast surgery fellowship training at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

Dr. Buchanan is excited to return to academics and thrives on relationships with her patients, staff and colleagues. Her clinical interests include nipple sparing mastectomies, oncoplastic approaches, and aesthetic flat closure for women who choose not to have reconstruction after mastectomy. Outside of work, she enjoys West Coast Swing/Lindy Hop dancing, baking pies for friends and family and watching action movies with her sons.