

The University of Michigan Department of Urology

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What's New January 29, 2016



PGY 1s

Urology Department Faculty and Staff

4 Items, 17 Minutes

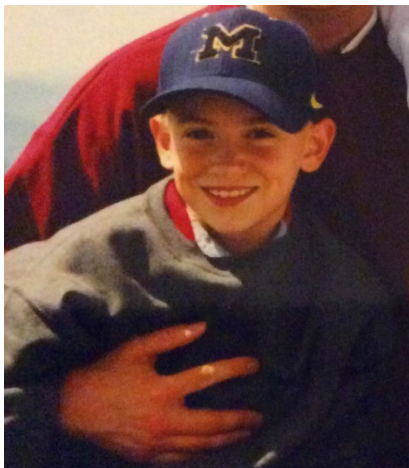
Today we hear from Urology's first year residents, Michael Fenstermaker, Chris Russell, Rita Jen and Matthew Lee. In this edition of What's New, the PGY 1s share their backgrounds and thoughts as they make their way through Year 1. Our residents have a wide range of backgrounds with family history coming from Ohio to South Korea. As you'll read below, each member of the cohort has benefited from tremendous support from family, friends and professional mentors throughout their burgeoning careers. With these experiences in their pockets, it's clear that the residents are well on their way to establishing new mentors and family ties to help them through their time at Michigan.

Now, without further ado, let's hear from our first year residents.

-Eric Anderson, Marketing and Communications Specialist

1. Michael Fenstermaker

By the time I was 8 years old, my family was 100% convinced that I would end up in Ann Arbor one way or another. My summers as a kid were often spent swimming for Club Wolverine, and I came away from these camps with a level of fanboyism for Michigan that bordered on obsessive. Growing up in Ohio in no way deterred me from wearing Michigan gear wherever I went. My relatives, rabid Ohio State fans, would try to get under my skin and refer to me as "Michigan Mike," which I naturally took as a compliment. So when it came time to select a college, I, naturally, chose to go to...Northwestern.



Maize and Blue was an essential part of my outfit from a young age

My path to Michigan would be delayed another few years for medical school. After college, I attended New York University School of Medicine. It was there that a series of fantastic mentors guided me to the field of urology. It was also there that I met my now-fiancée , Sherry. We were both fortunate to match here and are very excited to start this important part of our lives and our training together.



After proposing in Central Park

After a slight diversion from my 28-years-in-the-making plan, it is easy to call Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan, "home." Highlights of living in Michigan for me have been hiking the trails at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, exploring the burgeoning restaurant scene in Detroit, and attending my first game at the Big House. Residency has been a constant stream of learning and realizing how much I have left to learn. I look forward to learning from the amazing co-residents and faculty here at UM. Go Blue!



Sleeping Bear Dunes

2. Chris Russell

Growing up in the sunshine state it's hard to imagine that I ever would have ended up in a place that is, at least in my mind, equivalent to the arctic tundra. However, low and behold, on January 20, 2015 my wife Jessica and I received the exciting news that we would be moving to Ann Arbor. It's been a long and unpredictable journey to this point, but it's been a one of a kind experience that I wouldn't change for the world...let me explain!

I was fortunate enough to have been born and raised in Bradenton/Sarasota, Florida, home to beautiful beaches, laid back attitudes, and something I now appreciate more than ever...winter lows of 60°! The son of a housing contractor and school teacher, I had an amazing childhood alongside my one sibling, Josh, who is 2 years younger than me and my best friend. Although Florida is all I've ever known, my parents are both from Western Michigan and all of my family is still located in the state, which meant plenty of summer vacations to Lake Michigan and Mackinac growing up.

I went to the University of Central Florida for undergrad, where I played lacrosse and had my first real exposure to medicine. I would later attend the University of South Florida College of Medicine where I was exposed to Urology and quickly realized that it was everything that I was searching for in a medical specialty. In November 2014 I interviewed at the University of Michigan and immediately fell in love with the program and the Ann Arbor area. Match day last year was full of emotions...excitement from me, fear from Jessica (my fiancé at the time and the New Englander who had never set foot in the Midwest), and uncertain nervousness from both of us.



Jessica and I met in high school, fell in love, and have been together ever since. She is the most important person in my life and has always been my better half. Despite the 100 miles separating our undergraduate institutions, Jessica and I made a long distance relationship work for 4 years, which more often than not meant her driving back and forth, week in and week out. She is my rock, stood by me through medical school, and has never turned away from any challenge we have faced, including moving to Michigan. On March 7, 2015, after 9 years, I finally sealed the deal and Jessica and I were married in Sarasota, Florida.



Further adding to the craziness that was 2015, Jessica and I proceeded to purchase a home in Ann Arbor. We then packed everything we owned, including our 7 year old black lab Samantha, into a 26 ft moving truck and drove the 1,161 miles from Tampa to Ann Arbor. Shortly after moving we added a new member to our family, Sadie, a Yellow Lab/German Shepard puppy, who has mastered the art of keeping us on our toes. Jessica quickly found a job as a 2nd grade teacher and has adjusted nicely to the Ann Arbor school system. I would be lying if I said our move has been easy and seamless, but we have settled in nicely and are thoroughly enjoying all that Ann Arbor has to offer.



My time here thus far has been more than I ever could have asked for. I never would have imagined that I would have the opportunity to work with such an amazing group of people. Thank you all for helping to make our transition so smooth, and I look forward to all of the experiences to come.

3. Rita Jen

I am the second of four kids from a tightly knit Taiwanese family. I was born and raised in Lexington, South Carolina, a suburb of Columbia. Not too many people from Taiwan there but my family ended up there because my dad hated the cold. In the late 1970's my dad came from Taiwan to St. Louis for grad school. He met my mom through a mutual friend when she was in college in Illinois.



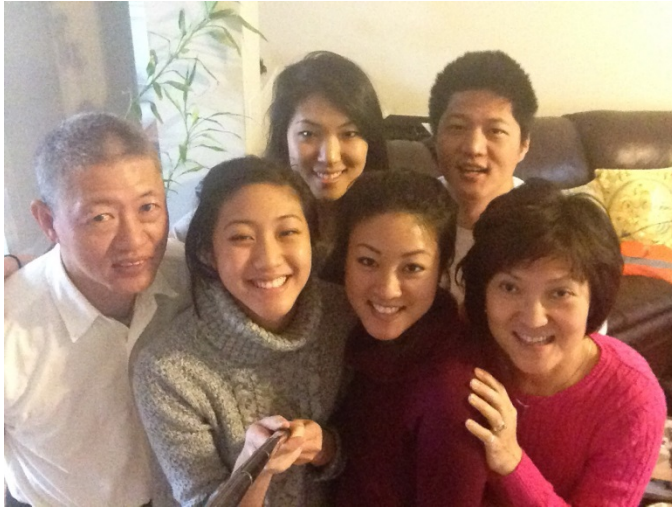
My parents' ID photos when they emigrated from Taiwan.

Also from Taiwan, my mom was planning on returning after finishing her degree. Obviously things changed; my parents got married and they moved to SC, a place with sunshine and mild winters. I grew up climbing trees, building blanket forts, grooming our various pets, and bossing around my younger sisters (occasionally my older brother tolerated my bossing him around).



Before the youngest sister was around.

We moved around within Lexington a couple of times, but these changes were always exciting and fun to me. And because of my close family, it was always easy to adjust.



Our whole family together after my sister gave my mom a selfie stick for her birthday.

I continued this trend after high school, moving to Atlanta for undergrad. My family just couldn't cope without me, so they moved to Atlanta when I was in college. I stayed in Atlanta for my MPH, and then moved to NYC to work at UNICEF after graduating. In case you were wondering, my family didn't follow me to NYC. And this time, I missed them enough to move back to Georgia for medical school. My sister Joy, who was living in Seattle at the time, also chose to move back to Georgia for dental school at the same institution. We were both excited for this reunion. By this time, it would have been 8 years since I would have lived with any of my immediate family members. Living together during school brought us closer, and Joy has really become one of my best friends (despite my bossing). She knows me the best and she was the one who told me that Michigan is the best fit for my training after listening to hours of residency program reviews.



Joy and I at our graduation from dental and medical school.

Even though I embrace the nomadic lifestyle that comes with the many years of schooling and though I've moved quite a bit in my life, coming to Ann Arbor has tested my ability to adapt. Adjusting to the weather and driving in snow have actually been the easier things. Not being able to boss my sisters around (instead, getting bossed around as an intern), not having my family close by, and not having enough time for all of my hobbies have been more of the challenging aspects. However, every member of the urology department has been nothing but welcoming and I feel lucky that I am a part of this new family. Now I have new siblings in the form of co-interns and co-residents, but don't worry, I probably won't boss you guys around!



My new bros

4. Matthew Lee

Hello everyone!

As a native of Novi, Michigan, coming back to Michigan for my Urology residency is a homecoming and a real blessing. My parents came over from Seoul, South Korea back in 1988 for my father's Master and PhD in Mechanical Engineering. I was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana shortly after in 1989. We lived in Texas for sometime, but came out to Michigan after my Dad got a job with Ford Motor Company.

As children, my mom always pushed my sister and I to be well-rounded: in school, sports, and extra-curricular activities. My sister was a fairly good swimmer, and as any younger brother might, I wanted to follow in her footsteps and it turned out I was a decent swimmer myself (although not quite as talented as Doerge or Dauw before me). Swimming was such a huge part of my teenage years and Eastern Michigan and UofM were some of my favorite pools to compete in. It's nostalgic for me every time I take the backroads of M-53 in Ypsilanti, drive by the Michigan athletic complex, or walk down Main street because I recall the countless double practices and swim meets every time.



One of the many meets I had the chance to swim with Michael Phelps while he was training in Ann Arbor - 2006

After graduating from Novi High School, through a balance of my academic and athletic achievements, I had the opportunity to go to Yale and be a part of their varsity swimming team (to be honest, I wasn't fast enough to be one of Michigan's top swimming recruits!). I had a fantastic time at Yale in and out of the classroom and of course, enjoyed the world-famous New Haven Pizza (go to Tomato's pizza in Farmington Hills for a taste)!



College Graduation with Family - 2011

While I was in college, my sister was in NYC, where she had moved immediately after graduating from Michigan undergrad to pursue a career in broadcast journalism and stand-up comedy. She figured out pretty quickly that stand-up comedy would be a long road to success, so she studied, applied, and was accepted to Columbia Dental School. This ended up playing a big factor into my medical school applications and, fortunately, I was also accepted to Columbia Medical School (also referred to as P&S - Physicians and Surgeons, the alma mater of Drs. Montgomery and Kraft). Living in the city during my early twenties, and attending the same school as my older sister was a dream come true.

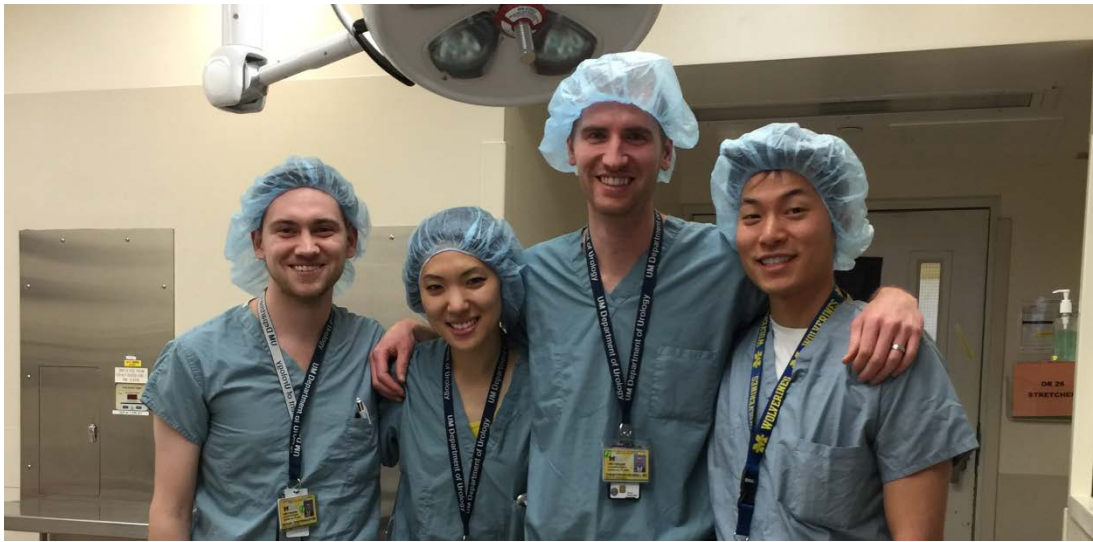


White Coat Ceremony with Family - 2011

Over halfway through intern year, I've certainly been faced with some challenges that I could not have been prepared for. I recall one day sharing a particularly difficult patient experience with Dr. Palapattu and he remarked that for those situations you can't prepare for, if handled well, we only have our families to thank for the values and characteristics they impart onto us. This was a poignant point for me

because, unfortunately, my sister is no longer with us. However, she has been and remains my greatest role model and source of inspiration. Although the challenges that lay ahead remain great, I have my family and my faith to thank for a strong foundation to weather any storm.

I am really honored to be part of our department where we have such generous, skilled, and thoughtful faculty and to have matched with a talented group of co-interns and seniors. I will do my best to live up to the standard of excellence that my seniors have established.



Urology Class of 2020, after OR26 with Dr. Sapan Ambani - 2016

For those of you I have not yet met, please say hi. I am pretty easy to get along with. Thanks for reading.