

Doc Talk

New!

Get to know your peers in Doc Talk, *CME's* new interview department! Join us every month as we talk to GPs across Canada about their careers, their lives and... their quirks.



Affiliations:

Assistant Professor,
Department of Family
Medicine,
University of Calgary
President,
Rockyview Medical Staff

Based in:

Calgary, Alberta

Special interests:

Education and geriatrics

1. If you weren't a doctor, what other profession would you choose?

I would have been a psychologist. I have always been fascinated with how people think and why they do the things they do.

2. What is the least enjoyable job you have ever had?

One summer, I worked for the tax department, filing corporate returns. It was a totally mind-numbing job. I had to quit. I signed up for a French course in Quebec for the rest of the summer, despite the loss of income.

3. Who would you get to play you in a movie about your life?

I would get Julie Andrews to play me. I have a "Mary Poppins" approach to life. I think looking at life on the roof tops amid the chimney pots is refreshing. I would love to exit unpleasant committee meetings by sweeping up the fireplace. We could have a lot more fun if there were a spoonful of sugar to help the medicine go down.

4. What was your least favourite subject in high school?

My least favourite subject in high school was physics. I wondered who thought up these problems and whether I really needed to know the answers to get through life. I have never been able to calculate correctly all the vectors that affect you as you are hurdled through space on a rocket. There was never any reconciliation between waves and points for me.

5. Who is your most memorable patient?

When I was a junior physician on the staff duty roster, I admitted an older patient who had fallen down a flight of stairs and fractured his ribs and pelvis. He had a long and complicated course in the hospital. I always tried to have something hopeful to say when I visited him, but it often didn't look very promising. One day, I asked him casually if there were anything else I could do for him. He looked at me and said, "You could pray with me." I paused and then complied. It made me realize there is more to recovery than physical needs. He died shortly thereafter.

6. Do you have any hobbies that others might be surprised to know about?

I like to write poetry. The biggest difficulty is creating the mental space and finding a time to write when there are no other demands.



7. What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

When I first started out, I took over a retiring physician's practice and he advised me never to leave any charting unfinished, to have all my reports and letters completed before the weekend and never to take any work home. I managed to accomplish this by setting aside an hour during the day for charting, phone calls, letters, *etc.* This has served me well.

8. If you had the choice, what place would you make your second home and why?

- a) Alaska
- b) Fiji
- c) The Outback

I would go to Alaska. I like the feeling of space, the solitude and the mountains adjacent to the sea. The ruggedness, the wildlife and the challenges of environment appeal to me.

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Stay Tuned...

Join us next month as we *Doc Talk* to **Dr. Catherine McKenna**, who is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta.

Wanna be interviewed?

If you'd like to talk to our readers or would like to nominate a colleague, feel free to contact us at cme@sta.ca.

You could be the next to *Doc Talk*!