

“Esse Quam Videri” (To Be Rather Than To Seem)

PM interviews Phillip Ward, DPM, APMA’s new President.

Podiatry Management recently had an opportunity to interview Dr. Phillip Ward, APMA’s new President.

PM: What inspired you to become a podiatrist?

Ward: My earliest introduction to the profession was through my father’s podiatrist, Daniel McArthur, DPM. I used to accompany my father to his office for his periodic at-risk foot care visits. Later, while playing college tennis, I developed some lesions on my feet which Dr. McArthur diagnosed as warts and treated for me. I became more interested in the profession and did my due diligence that showed podiatrists were specialists and physicians of the foot and ankle. Later in my college days (after some shoulder injuries ended my college tennis career), I started working mid-night shift in the University of North Carolina hospital laboratories. I became more interested in becoming a doctor and decided that podiatry offered everything that I desired: dermatology, orthopedics, surgery, sports medicine, public health and some flexibility in my work schedule.

PM: How did you originally become an APMA member?

Ward: I was a member of the Des Moines University class of 1988, which incidentally has produced at least six APMA component presidents. We were the third DPM graduating class from DMU. We were all



Phillip Ward, DPM

members of the American Podiatric Medical Student Association, although I was never an elected student leader. I did my residency at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Baltimore, MD under the tutelage of Daniel J. McCarthy, DPM, PhD, who insisted that all his residents join APMA. We were members of the Federal Service Component. After I finished my residency, I completed a fellowship in foot and ankle surgery under J. Barry Johnson, DPM in Winston-Salem, NC. He was a board member of PICA and insisted that I continue my APMA membership, so I did and switched to the North Carolina component.

PM: Tell us about your history with APMA and how you came to be interested in a role on the board.

Ward: While in my residency, I was approached to be involved with founding the American Podiatric Medical Postgraduate Association by Drs. Hal Ornstein, Peter Paicos, and Francine Lagana. We were all appointed to APMA committees in 1989 by President Eric Hubbard. I was put on the Public Affairs Committee, and at our first committee meeting, we developed the 1-800-FOOTCARE number for public information. It was at that point that I realized I wanted to be fully involved in APMA and possibly become a leader of the profession. I began attending the North Carolina podiatry meetings and was appointed to committees and eventually elected to the board of directors in NC. I became president of the North Carolina Foot and Ankle Society and a delegate to the APMA House of Delegates in 1997. The fellowship and the fraternal nature of the profession was evident at all stages of my development as a leader.

PM: What has your service on the board taught you, and how has it prepared you for the presidency?

Ward: When I leave the APMA Board of Trustees, I will have invested thirteen years as a board member. If you add that to the seven years I was on the NCFAS board and that makes up over two thirds of my career. One cannot spend that much

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time and effort in service to the profession without developing some leadership qualities. You learn what type of leadership style best suits your personality. You learn how to act and sometimes, more importantly, how not to act. The tenure on the board allows you to have a historical knowledge base so that when an issue arises, you have a good perspective based on your own personal experience. My father taught me that a smart person learns from his own mistakes and that a genius learns from other people's mistakes. I think I have been able to do both.

PM: What are your priorities for the coming year as president?

Ward: My theme for this year is the North Carolina State Motto "Esse Quam Videri", which translated means "To Be Rather Than To Seem." As a profession, we must show our friends and detractors what and who we actually are and not let them continue to believe what they think we are. Vision 2015 has shown our strengths and, in some cases, some weaknesses. It has shown us the pathway to parity with our allopathic and osteopathic colleagues. APMA is and always has been a facilitator in Vision 2015. Much of the tenets of Vision 2015 have been accomplished but realistically there are some goals left to be accomplished—such as increasing the applicant pool, increasing the number of available residencies, and accomplishing the full integration of our members into the MD/DO world.

The stakeholders have worked hard to get us to where we are now and I am certain that they will continue to work with APMA to achieve our complete parity in the health-care community. My goal is that my daughter, who graduated from DMU in 2014, and all future podiatric generations will be able to practice whatever type of foot and ankle care they are educated, trained and experienced in. And that they are allowed and encouraged to practice in whatever type of practice arrangement that best suits them in whatever facility they choose. Period.

Our legislative activity needs to overcome the Medicaid, the Veterans Administration, and the armed services obstacles. I feel certain that these obstacles will fall soon. After many years of disappointment, there seems to be hope.

PM: If you could wave a magic wand and change one thing in the profession, what would it be?

Ward: This is a nice opportunity to mention that the APMA National Meeting will be in Orlando July 23-26. While in Orlando, you can visit the Harry Potter store at Universal Studios and purchase your own magic wand. If I had a magic wand, I would wave it to change the attitude of the naysayer members of our profession to turn them positive. We have accomplished so much since I graduated in 1988.

you by keeping abreast of all the new changes in healthcare.

PM: You've been involved in a number of other medical organizations. How has your role in these groups affected your perspective on podiatric medicine?

Ward: The first APMA component I joined was the American Society of Podiatric Dermatology. My residency director was the Executive Director of ASPD; so joining was mandatory, not voluntary. Being a member of ASPD helped fuel my desire to learn more about the skin and soft tissue healing, which has now morphed into a passion for wound care. I'm currently a member of the Society for Vascular Surgery (SVS). Podiatrists have membership in the physician category of SVS, which any

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We are not the same profession we were a mere quarter of a century ago. The education, training, and experiences of our residents are exceptional. Our own members have to realize just how exceptional we are before we can spread the message to the rest of the medical world.

PM: Positivity is an incredibly important initial step. Specifically, what words of advice do you have for members about how best to contribute to the profession's success?

Ward: Become involved in your profession. Give talks in your community. Talk to other doctors about our education, training, and experience. Talk to prospective students. Read the e-mails and other communications that APMA sends out. Read the podiatry journals and periodicals. Attend your local, state, regional and national APMA meetings. Help your leaders promote and advance the profession. Being involved not only helps the profession but also helps

MD or DO who isn't a vascular surgeon would be placed in. The 2015 APMA House of Delegates extended the same courtesy to any MD and DO who wants to join APMA. This is a great step toward parity.

I have spent the last eight years as the APMA representative to CPT. I also serve on the Editorial Board of the CPT Assistant, which is the monthly American Medical Association publication that clarifies coding questions and irregularities. I am honored to be the first podiatrist ever to be elected to that board. Visibility on this AMA committee helps push the pillar of Vision 2015 related to inter-professional relationships.

I currently am a member of ACFAOM, ASPS, ACFAS, ASPD, AAPP, SVS, and APHA. In April 2015, I participated in an educational trip to Cuba through APHA to investigate how they treat diabetic foot wounds. Look for more information about this trip in future publications and from the lectern.

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PM: *You've also been involved in a wide variety of practice settings. Can you tell us about that?*

Ward: During my career, I have worked in almost every practice setting and arrangement possible, except academic and active military. Currently, I work in Durham, NC in a sixty-member podiatric state-wide "supergroup." The group allows us to better manage the business of medicine. There are four podiatrists in our office, along with ten clerical and clinical assistants. We are on staff at a surgery center, and two hospitals, one of which is owned by a large teaching hospital/medical school. We participate with all major third-party insurance companies and have all the technological bells and whistles of a modern medical practice.

PM: *Tell us about your family.*

Ward: My wife Debbie is writing her dissertation for her doctorate in leadership and policy. We have four adult children. Alyssa lives in Houston, is a former Houston Rockets cheerleader, and works in the real estate industry. Meredith is a podiatrist and is in her residency in Hartford, CT. Brooke was a college cheerleader at Coastal Carolina University and is exploring options on how to best use her degree in health promotions. Marshall is in optometry school in Philadelphia and plays professional Frisbee for the Philadelphia Spinners. Yes, there actually is a professional Frisbee league.

Debbie and I love to travel. That is fortunate because I will have approximately 140 travel days during my presidential year. She will be able to accompany me on some of these trips, and I am grateful that she will be able to experience my presidential year with me.

I play golf as much as possible (a

remnant of growing up in Pinehurst, NC) and played competitive USTA tennis for more than 45 years until a wrist injury ended my ability to play 2 years ago. I am a Tarheel at heart and a UNC class of 1983 graduate. I bleed Carolina Blue and am not hesitant to say so. My favorite two teams are Carolina and whoever is playing against Duke.

PM: *What else should APMA members know?*

Ward: There is an old Baptist hymn that says "May those who come behind me find me faithful." I pledge to do my best, and I pray that the future generations of podiatrists who come after me do indeed find me faithful to the profession.

You can follow Dr. Ward on Twitter @APMApresident and contact him via e-mail through APMA-president@apma.org. **PM**