

# Mentorship

By Faison Green Knox, MD



**D**id anyone else love March as much as I did? It was brutal with Daylight Saving Time, maybe because I'm past the big 5-0 and small changes in my routine affect me more than I want to admit.

Now, though, the shrubs and trees are blooming, the oh-so-green grass is cool under foot, and the crisp air is hanging around past noon. Charlotte has such beautiful springs. Don't we all enjoy getting home while it's still light out?

On the weekends, I like to relax in my hammock after a bike ride or run. It's amazing to see how the bushes and trees in our yard have grown and filled out over the years (and now I'm tearing up as I remember our kids, who are teenagers now, played on the swingset and hunted for Easter eggs in the backyard).

Just as families and flora get taller and bloom, so do careers. It was three years ago that I left Novant after 18 very fulfilling years. I matured a lot there — personally and professionally — and honed my skills as a communicator and physician. Leaving was both terrifying and exhilarating.

Yet, I was fully prepared. Mentors had led, taught, and challenged me tremendously. I believe mentorship is one of the greatest gifts doctors can receive (and give!) in their careers.

What comes up when doing an Internet search for mentorship and mentoring? "The 3 C's" of course: **connection, communication, collaboration**. If you read my last two letters, then you know these concepts are what membership in MCMS is all about — young physicians are mentored; mid-level and seasoned doctors continue to receive mentorship, while also mentoring those coming up under them; and physician-leaders (as well as retired docs) continue to make an impact in our community by imparting their tremendous wisdom.

***What does a mentorship program need to make it work?***

- ✓ interest
- ✓ investment
- ✓ involvement
- ✓ inspiration

Who among us has fond memories of a mentor in our respective fields or in medicine in general? At our recent MCMS social, I ran into one of my family medicine residency mentors, Dr. Darlyne Menscer. She and I laughed together about her "raising" many of the doctors who are now serving the Charlotte medical community, several of whom have been our own MCMS presidents.



Three valued mentors from my residency, Darlyne Menscer, MD, Matthew Alexander, PhD, and Dael Waxman, MD.

Also pictured, my buddies, Stuart Miller, MD, Dave Price, MD, and Kate Long, MD.



While I definitely cannot recall everything she taught me, I certainly remember how much her patients appreciated the relationship they had with her. The depth and breadth of her physician-patient relationships seemed like no other; this made a distinct impact on me, perhaps more than any other rotation of my residency.

Other mentors I think about fondly and often (but likely never have thanked) are the docs who first hired me out of residency. Wow, was I so scared of missing cardiac chest pain (still am!), and, oh my gosh, did I run almost every EKG and chest pain patient by either Dr. Skip Barkley or Dr. Curtis Desena! Thank you, guys, for being so patient with me as I learned what happens outside in the “real world” of medicine.

We want the next group of docs to learn from mistakes we think we might have made, but more importantly we need to provide them with relationships that can feed them as professionals along their career paths and so on.

Do you agree that MCMS is the perfect place to do this? Look over that above list of words that describe a good mentorship program again. When you consider your career as a physician, as well as close colleagues ahead of you and behind you, how do you see the value of mentorship?

Another friend and mentor of mine, Dr John Allbert, embodied interest, involvement, investment, and inspiration. He was an attending physician when I was a lost and terrified family medicine intern on the OB wards 20-plus years ago. Dr. A was “one of the nice ones” who I never dreaded calling when I needed help and the upper-level residents were caught in another case. He has continued to be a mentor and has served as an MCMS president ... and now, he is inviting us to invest in a program with an incredible cause. I hope you can join us at the upcoming Physicians’ Impact Fund event! [See below.]

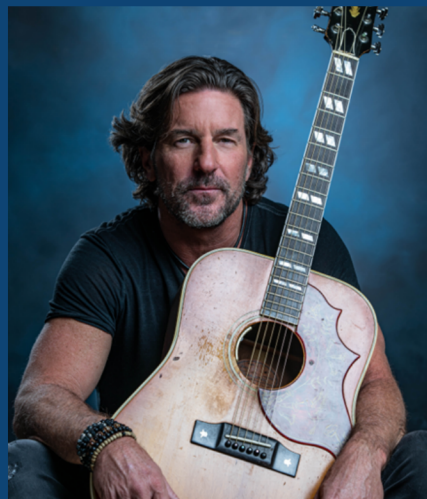
Are you interested in helping MCMS add structure to a mentorship program? Please let us know!

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Please contact [kiki@meckmed.org](mailto:kiki@meckmed.org) with questions.