

## Roger A. Mitchell Jr., MD



**Current position:** Chief Medical Examiner, Washington, DC

**Education history:**

MD – New Jersey Medical School, Newark NJ

Post-Sophomore Fellowship – NYU – Dept. of Pathology

Anatomic and Clinical Pathology Residency – The George Washington Hospital, Dept. of Pathology

Chief Resident – 2005-2006

Forensic Pathology Fellowship – NYC OCME

Masters of Divinity (candidate) – Fuller Theological Seminary

### HOW DID YOU INITIALLY BECOME INTERESTED IN FORENSIC PATHOLOGY?

My interest in forensic pathology began at the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I was a forensic biologist when I did a tour of the DC Medical Examiner, where I was first exposed. I wanted to study violence prevention, and I thought the best way was to learn from the cases found within the Medical Examiner System. So I left the FBI to pursue a career in medicine.

### WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR ASPIRING FORENSIC PATHOLOGISTS, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS TO MATCH INTO A PATHOLOGY RESIDENCY PROGRAM AND ACCEPTANCE INTO A FORENSIC PATHOLOGY FELLOWSHIP?

My advice would be to make sure that you become not only a student of medicine and pathology but also a student of common sense. A good forensic pathologist can see things with a lens capable of articulating his/her findings with a common tongue. In other words, become well-rounded. As far as pathology programs, focus on both AP and CP. Find a residency program that gives you access to both didactic and practical experience. The program should have access to a busy medical examiner's office. As it relates to the forensic pathology fellowship, find a program that is busy but also has a culture compatible with you personality. Make sure you rotate 1 month at the FP Program that you are interested in.

**WHAT IS THE MOST REWARDING ASPECT OF BEING A FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST?**

The most rewarding aspect has been being part of larger community that is interested in the prevention of disease and injury. In addition, I have thoroughly enjoyed helping to build and improve the OCME in Washington DC.

**WHAT IS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE OF BEING A FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST?**

The greatest challenge has been developing support from the larger local government to ensure proper funding.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES/CHALLENGES OF FORENSIC PATHOLOGY TODAY?**

The most important issue facing forensic pathology is recruitment. We are in great need to bring more pathologists into the sub-specialty.

**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST MEMORABLE CASE AND WHY?**

I have several memorable cases. I think the most memorable case was a young woman who was found in an oil drum, wrapped in plastic bag, and covered in cement. She was moderately decomposed, but had no injuries to speak of. This was one of the rare cases that was certified as COD: Homicidal Violence, MOD: Homicide.

**WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST UNEXPECTED FINDING YOU HAVE ENCOUNTERED DURING A CASE?**

Recently I had a case of a man who had a perforated small bowel secondary to his purposeful ingestion of cigarette butts. A complex of pica.

**WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORKING WITH YOUR TEAM?**

My team is diverse and comes from different forensic pathology fellowship programs. I appreciate the hard work, professionalism and dedication of my team.

**WHO IS YOUR ROLE MODEL AND WHY?**

I have many role models but I would say my Pastor, Dexter U Nutall, is one of my biggest role models. Largely because of his selflessness and his dedication to serving people with humility and courage.

**WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES AND HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN A WORK-LIFE BALANCE?**

I am a minister in the Christian Church. I play Golf and spend time with my family. Lastly, I enjoy cooking on the grill.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE WORK SOUNDTRACK AND WHY?**

I am a big fan of gospel music. Make Room by Jonathan McReynolds is fantastic. I like to keep my mind focused on what is important. Gospel music does that for me. I am listening to Frank Sinatra and PJ Morton right now as well.

**WHAT IS YOUR MOST-LIKED MEAL AT YOUR FAVORITE LOCAL RESTAURANT?**

My favorite meal is a bone-in filet mignon with fingerling potatoes and broccolini. Any good Steak House.