

Nick Batalis, MD



Current position:

Professor, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
Director, Pathology residency and Forensic Pathology
fellowship training programs
Medical University of South Carolina

Education history:

B.S.: Butler University

M.D.: Indiana University School of Medicine

Residency: Medical University of South Carolina

Fellowship: UT Southwestern Medical Center/Southwestern
Institute of Forensic Sciences

HOW DID YOU INITIALLY BECOME INTERESTED IN FORENSIC PATHOLOGY?

I initially became interested in the field of forensic pathology through exposure to the field during my second year medical school course, as I was extremely fortunate to have Dr. Joe Prahlow as my pathology professor for the entire course. While the general pathology material was somewhat interesting, I was intrigued by the forensic presentations that he would deliver when using our class as a test audience. Still, I did not fully entertain forensic pathology as a career option until my clinical years when I took a step back and realized those forensic lectures were the coolest thing I had seen in medical school.

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?

I think finding a good mentor is the single most important thing for someone considering forensic pathology. Forensic pathology is such a small field without a lot of exposure in most medical schools, and even some residencies, so having someone you can rely on to show you the path is invaluable. I was fortunate enough to have Drs. Prahlow and John Pless introduce me to the field in medical school, Drs. Erin Presnell and Kim Collins to foster my interest in forensics during residency, and several folks in Dallas during my

fellowship to help shape me into the forensic pathologist I am today. I also consider myself fortunate to have several mentors that I've never worked with directly but know through committees including both Greg Davises and Steve Cina.

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

Certainly the roles we play in the judicial and public health systems, along with being able to help families in their worst of times, are important and rewarding, but for me the most rewarding aspect of being a forensic pathologist is being able to pay it forward by helping mentor medical students, pathology residents, and forensic pathology fellows. As I mentioned, I was fortunate to have many mentors and I want to be able to serve in that role for the next generation of forensic pathologists.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORKING WITH YOUR TEAM?

Working side-by-side with folks from different backgrounds who all come together to accomplish the same goal. We have a great, hard-working team that is able to put aside any personal differences and/or institutional gripes and produce high quality work for the families, investigators, and coroners we work with, even though our caseload continues to climb and stresses the system. A steady stream of rotating students, residents, and fellows also helps to keep things fresh by continually provide new perspectives.

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

I like to stay active and my hobbies are basically anything sports related, whether it be watching, playing, or now coaching my sons' teams (ages 5 and 9). I'm happy that I'm able to share my love of sports with my sons and spend invaluable time with them while they still want to be around me. Having a good work-life balance was something I definitely valued and considered when choosing my career, and while it is tough to manage at times, forensic pathology has been a great fit.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE WORK SOUNDTRACK AND WHY?

I definitely like to have the music going while in the autopsy room but I like to mix it up and don't have a 'go-to' album. Some days, I like it more laid back and may go with the Dave Matthews Band, while other days it is hard to beat a good AC/DC or Metallica playlist.