

ALUMNI STORIES



**Marvell Elaine Seymour Major, BSc.,
ASCP CT^{CM}, MBBS**

Cytotechnologist and Medical Doctor
Neoplastic Cytology Laboratory

Nassau, Bahamas

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
**MDAnderson
Cancer Center**

Making Cancer History®

Continuing the family legacy

Dr. Marvell Major's unique background of being a second-generation cytotechnologist makes for an interesting story. Dr. Major is a board-certified pathologist who was born and raised in the Bahamas. Dr. Major's mother, Marilyn Major, has the distinction of being the first United States board certified cytotechnologist in The Bahamas where she opened a private cytology laboratory in the early 1980s and where Dr. Major spent time as a child.

As soon as Dr. Major was old enough to work, she was granted a summer job in her mother's lab. It is here that Dr. Major grew familiar with laboratory processes and terminology, developing a love and interest for the profession and to her mother's delight, Dr. Major decided to become a cytotechnologist. Dr. Major chose MD Anderson's School of Health Professions cytology program and began her studies as one of 8 students in her graduating class.

During her senior year at MD Anderson, Dr. Major was encouraged by mentors to consider becoming a pathologist. This was a logical step as it made sense to pursue pathology given her familiarity and experience gained at her mother's lab and at MD Anderson Cancer Center. Thanks to much encouragement, Dr. Major began medical school at The University of The West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica having received a scholarship from the government of the Bahamas. During the first summer of her first year in medical school, Dr. Major shadowed a local pathologist which helped her realize that certain aspects of pathology were not the best fit for her personality. She appreciates the role that pathologists play in the diagnoses of patients, but she wasn't satisfied with the limited living patient interactions. Dr. Major wanted to work directly with living patients and have a positive impact on their health outcomes.

After completing her medical internship, Dr. Major, who is now a general practitioner in Nassau, Bahamas, worked as a senior house officer in the Department of Pediatrics at the Princess Margaret Hospital, located in Nassau, Bahamas, where she worked primarily in the neonatal intensive care unit. One of the main reasons Dr. Major loves working with children is because of the greater outcomes achieved as most parents want the best for their children. There is greater compliance with a younger population of patients as opposed to an adult patient population.

Today, as her mother is transitioning into retirement, Dr. Major is transitioning into her mother's leadership role at the lab.

Dr. Major describes her time at MD Anderson as some of the best years of her life. She credits MD Anderson with shaping her to be patient focused which has led to many professional successes. She became close friends with her cytology classmates and keeps in touch with almost all of them today. She often refers people to MD Anderson for both patient care, education and training because of its' stellar learning and professional environment.

MD Anderson program(s) in which I trained

MD Anderson School of Health Professions – Houston, TX

Academic area of specialization

Cytotechnology

Current Employer

Neoplastic Cytology Laboratory

Current City

Nassau, Bahamas

Current Position

Cytotechnologist and Medical Doctor

Mentors

While at MD Anderson, Marvell experienced great support from the cytotechnology program director, Dr. Stephanie Hamilton. Dr. Hamilton liked Dr. Major's story of being a second-generation cytotechnologist and stuck by her during the entire program. Dr. Hamilton helped bring into perspective all the knowledge that Dr. Major brought with her from her experience in her mother's lab.

Family

Single, no children, one dog named Texas, who is a potcake, which in the US is known as a mutt.

Graduate school(s) from which I received a degree(s)

MD Anderson School of Health Professions
Houston, TX
BS, Cytotechnology – 2010

The University of the West Indies
Kingston, Jamaica
MBBS – Bachelor of Medicine & Bachelor of Surgery (*equivalent to an M.D. in the United States*)
2015

High school from which I graduated

Queen’s College
Nassau, Bahamas
2005

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