

## ALUMNI STORIES



**Peter C. Hu, Ph.D., MLS(ASCP)<sup>CM</sup>, CG<sup>CM</sup>,  
MB<sup>CM</sup>, FACSc, FASAHP**

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center  
School of Health Professions

Houston, Texas

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS  
**MDAnderson  
Cancer Center**

Making Cancer History®

## You're lucky if you find a corner piece

There are many reasons that motivate people to go to work every day. For Peter Hu, Ph.D., graduate of the MD Anderson School of Health Professions, a field that he describes as “trying to put together a 1,000-piece puzzle but given 2,000 pieces to work with” was his choice and remains his passion today.

Dr. Hu wears many hats at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center School of Health Professions. He's a tenured professor in the medical laboratory sciences programs. He oversees research initiatives for the School of Health Professions. He is responsible for providing strategic direction to grow school programs, including recruitment and retention of students and the teaching faculty. He oversees the diagnostic molecular science-based school programs.

When he was a microbiology graduate student at Lamar University in Beaumont, a conversation with his thesis advisor catapulted his career toward healthcare. At the time he had no definitive post-graduation career plans. The advisor had a background in laboratory medicine and recognizing Dr. Hu's skill set, she encouraged him to consider a like career path. Dr. Hu began exploring the advisor's suggestions and randomly came across MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. After learning more about MD Anderson's mission and goals, he knew right away that he had found a place that afforded him a significant opportunity to fulfill his career ambition of impacting others. He had found his *professional home*.

The most favored part of his job is the ability to influence, guide and mentor students into gainful employment. And doing so at the #1 ranked cancer center housed in the world's largest medical center is a source of tremendous pride. With the critical shortage of diagnostic laboratory technologists putting great strain on operating laboratories, knowing that his work helps fill needed positions that ultimately benefit physicians and patients is very satisfying for Dr. Hu. Daily he is *paying it forward* by helping students find their special contribution niche within the multiple medical laboratory science disciplines.

His program outcomes are some of the highest in the nation:

- 99% of his students have completed the program curriculum and graduated.
- An average of 96% of his students during the past 18 years have passed the national board certification exams on their first attempt.
- 98% of his students have found related employment within three months post-graduation.

Dr. Hu's research focus can be summarized by his career milestones. As a junior faculty, his area of interest was in clinical cytogenetics and cytogenetics as it pertains to hematological malignancies. Mid-career, he shifted to allied health education focusing on medical laboratory science disciplines, and clinical laboratory and program accreditations. Currently, he enjoys serving on Master of Science thesis research committees and pursuing research on allied health policies and education.

There is much discovery in the continuously evolving field of cancer. Today's advanced research and technology are constantly creating new puzzle pieces for which there is no specific reference. Training the next generation of laboratory technologists to adequately prepare them for the changing dynamics they will encounter in their careers is key to ensuring medical laboratories are staffed with consummate professionals. Under Dr. Hu's direction, students learn how to handle the random puzzle pieces they encounter. *And finding a corner piece is always a bonus.*

## **Current Employer**

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center School of Health Professions

## **Current Positions**

- Associate Dean, Research and Strategic Initiatives
- Graduate Program Director for Diagnostic Genetics
- Program Director for Molecular Genetic Technology
- Professor (Tenure), MD Anderson Cancer Center School of Health Professions
- Endowed Titles:
  - The University of Texas Distinguished Teaching Professor
  - MD Anderson Cancer Center Distinguished Educator

## Credentials

### Board Certifications:

- American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP), Generalist Medical Technology, 1996-2009
- National Certification Agency (NCA), Generalist Medical Technologist, 1996, 2005, 2008
- National Certification Agency (NCA), Clinical Laboratory Specialist in Cytogenetics, 1997, 2003, 2006, 2009
- National Certification Agency (NCA), Clinical Laboratory Specialist in Molecular Biology, 2005, 2008
- American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP), Specialist in Molecular Pathology, 2005, 2008
- American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP), Specialist in Molecular Biology, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2020
- American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP), Specialist in Cytogenetics, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2020
- American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP), Medical Laboratory Scientist, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2020
- University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX, Radiation Safety Certification, 2005
- Fellow of The Association for Clinical Scientists (FACSc), 2015
- Fellow of The Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions, 2020

### Current Location

Houston, Texas

## Works of Interest

- [Fate of Schistosoma mansoni in Biomphalaria obstructa](#)
- [Antenatal Diagnosis of De Novo Balanced Structural Chromosomal Aberrations in Latin America](#)
- [Determination of secondary chromosomal aberrations of chronic myelocytic leukemia](#)
- [Microsatellite instability in saliva from patients with hereditary non-polyposis colon cancer and siblings carrying germline mismatch repair gene mutations](#)
- [Circulating Endothelial Cells and Endothelial Progenitors as Surrogate Biomarkers in Vascular Dysfunction](#)
- [Link to all of Dr. Hu's published works](#)

## Fellowships, Awards & Recognitions

- 2019 – University of Texas Kenneth I. Shine Academy of Health Science Education, Austin, TX
- 2019 – MD Anderson Distinguished Educator, MD Anderson Cancer Center
- 2019 – MD Anderson LEADership Award, MD Anderson Cancer Center
- 2018 – Clinical Scientists of the Year Award, Association for Clinical Scientists Annual Meeting, Houston, TX
- 2017 – American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science Joseph J. Kleiner Award for best articles of the year (Honorable Mention)
- 2016 – UrEssential Award, Cardinal Health
- 2016 – MD Anderson Distinguished Faculty Award, Nominee, MD Anderson Cancer Center
- 2015 – Faculty Spotlight, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
- 2013 – ASCLS Bio-Rad Achievement Award, Houston, TX
- 2012 – The University of Texas System Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award, Austin, TX
- 2012 – Regional Member Award, American Society for Clinical Pathology, Boston, MA

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- 2011 – H.A. Bardwell Award, Texas Association for Clinical Laboratory Science Annual Convention, Austin, TX
- 2011 – Young Clinical Scientist Award, Association of Clinical Scientists Annual Meeting, Louisville, KY
- 2011 – AGT Outstanding Achievement Award, Association of Genetic Technologist Annual Convention, Minneapolis, MN
- 2008 – The Joseph Waurin Award for Excellence in Education, Association of Genetic Technologist Annual Convention, Houston, TX
- 2008 – Theriot Award for Development of Significant Materials in Media Equipment, American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science Annual Convention, Washington D.C.
- 2008 – Scientific Research Award Finalist, American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science Annual Convention, Washington D.C.
- 2008 – Faculty Educator of the Month, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
- 2008 – Lamar University September Alumni Spotlight
- 2007 & 2008 – Spirit of Community Award, Trainee and Alumni Affairs, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX
- 2007 – Outstanding Service Award – Convention Program Chair, Texas Association for Clinical Laboratory Science, Dallas, TX
- Omicron Sigma Award – American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science
  - State Level - Dallas, TX – 2007
  - Region Level –Austin, TX, 2008
  - Region Level –Galveston, TX, 2009
  - Regional Level –El Paso, TX, 2010
  - National Level – Atlanta, GA, 2011
  - National Level – Providence, RI, 2023
- 2004 – Staff Educator of the Month Award for August, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX

- 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 – Outstanding Educator, MD Anderson Cancer Center
- Applied Imaging – National Karyotyping Contest, Association of Genetic Technologist Annual Convention – 1st Place, Atlanta, GA, 2003; 2nd Place, Anaheim, CA, 2004; 3rd Place, Kansas City, MO, 2005

### Mentors

I have had many mentors at MD Anderson Cancer Center throughout my tenure. The two that come to mind often are ***Dr. Michael Ahearn***, the founding dean of the MD Anderson Cancer Center School of Health Professions, and ***Dr. Michael Siciliano***, my Ph.D. dissertation advisor. They taught me patience, to seek opportunities, and to do things the right way or don't do them at all.

I still use many of their colloquial phrases today for my students. A few of them are:

- *If you want to eat an elephant, you can only eat it one bite at a time.*
- *You get a lot more with honey than with vinegar.*
- *The squeaky wheel gets the oil.*
- And one of my favorites...*Be careful not to use the cart to lead the horse.*

Decades later, these phrases have transformed into “humble inquiries,” “resilience,” or “emotional intelligence,” but the concepts are the same. Their influences on both my career development and personal life have been invaluable.

***Michael Ahearn, Ph.D.***, joined MD Anderson in 1965 and directed the diagnostic ultrastructure hematology laboratory for 23 years. He then joined the Office of Academic Programs and eventually became the founding dean of the School of Health Professions.

***Michael Siciliano, Ph.D.***, was a professor in the MD Anderson Department of Genetics. He retired in 2008.

## Family

- I'm married to Cynthia, my wife of 34 years. We have two boys, Alexander and Justin, both of whom are graduating this year. Soon we'll have a practicing lawyer and a licensed doctor of Physical Therapy in our family!
- Outside of work we love to travel as a family. We've been to all but three states in the US and hope to do some international travel soon.

## Online profile

- [LinkedIn profile](#)

## MD Anderson program(s) in which I trained

- MD Anderson Cancer Center School of Health Professions
  - Medical Technology – 1995
  - Cytogenetic Technology – 1996

## Academic area of specialization

- Brain tumor therapies
- Cytogenetics Technology
- Molecular Genetic Technology

## Graduate school(s) and training

- Trident University (TUI) – Cypress, CA  
Ph.D. – Healthcare Administration  
Dissertation – MD Anderson Cancer Center Department of Genetics – 2008

- The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center School of Health Professions  
Medical Technology – 1996  
Cytogenetic Technology – 1997
- Lamar University – Beaumont, TX  
M.S. – Microbiology, 1995

**Undergraduate school from which I received a degree**

Purdue University – West Lafayette, IN  
B.A. – Psychology, 1991

**High school from which I graduated**

Soldotna High School  
Soldotna, AK – 1987

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*This article was published and is up-to-date as of June 2023.*

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