

Marites P. Melancon, Ph.D.

Associate Professor in Interventional Radiology & Director of Summer Experience and Odyssey Programs
MD Anderson Cancer Center
Houston, Texas



Another career fueled by childhood intrigue

As a young girl, Marites Melancon, Ph.D., or Tess, often accompanied her father to his work at a soap factory in the Philippines where Tess grew up. During those visits to her father's work, Tess was intrigued by how raw materials were used to create everyday items.

Her interest in research involving raw materials continued into her education. As an undergraduate student at the University of San Carlos in Cebu City, Philippines, the topic of her thesis focused on natural products chemistry.

Tess came to the MD Anderson UTHealth Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences in Houston, Texas, after completing her undergraduate degree and has never looked back. Today Tess oversees her multiple grant-funded research lab at MD Anderson Cancer Center. Her creativity, resourcefulness and imagination continue to provide inspiration as she leads research efforts involving the development of novel nanomedicine and medical devices. Development of targeted imaging and therapeutic agents that will eventually be translated to the clinic to improve the management of cancer through early tumor detection and individualized therapy is her primary goal.

Tess is an Associate Professor in Interventional Radiology & director of the Summer Experience and Odyssey Programs at MD Anderson Cancer Center. She considers her greatest professional accomplishment to be watching her trainees move on to attend medical school, complete fellowships or pursue independent research careers.

<i>MD Anderson School from which I graduated</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– MD Anderson UTHealth Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences– Odyssey Postdoctoral Research Fellowship
<i>Years Attended</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MD Anderson UTHealth Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, 2003 – 2007• Odyssey Fellow, 2008 – 2011

This is my story

<i>Current Employer</i>	MD Anderson Cancer Center
<i>Current City</i>	Houston, Texas
<i>Current Position</i>	Associate Professor in Interventional Radiology & Director of Summer Experience and Odyssey Programs
<i>What is your career motivation?</i>	<p>My parents inspired myself and my four siblings to achieve excellent educations and to make something of ourselves to better the world we live in. I was a curious child without a lot of money to pour into much outside of true necessities. I used what materials I had available to me, most of them cost nothing as they were a natural part of my environment. I experimented with the materials and although I didn't make any huge discovery in my childhood lab of sorts, my curiosity sent me in many directions that laid the foundation for my research career.</p>
<i>Academic area of specialization</i>	Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
<i>Who are your mentors?</i>	<p>Drs. Chun Li, Jason Stafford and Sue-Hwa Lin have or currently serve as mentors to me. They are very accomplished scientists and innately good people as well. As a grad student and post doc in their respective labs, I always felt that my thoughts and opinions mattered. I had an equal vote in the decision-making process, i.e. what projects to pursue, experiments to do next, etc. This approach was a great learning method and helped me build confidence in my abilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– <i>Chun Li, Ph.D. is a faculty member of the MD Anderson Department of Cancer Systems Imaging, Division of Diagnostic Imaging.</i>– <i>R. Jason Stafford, Ph.D. is a faculty member of the MD Anderson Department of Imaging Physics, Division of Diagnostic Imaging.</i>– <i>Sue-Hwa Lin, Ph.D. is a faculty member of the MD Anderson Department of Translational Molecular Pathology, Division of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine.</i>

<p><i>Works of interest</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antitumor Efficacy of Liposome-Encapsulated NVP-BEZ235 Combined with Irreversible Electroporation for Head and Neck Cancer • Magnetic resonance and photoacoustic imaging of brain tumor mediated by mesenchymal stem cell labeled with multifunctional nanoparticle introduced via carotid artery injection • Radiopaque Resorbable Inferior Vena Cava Filter Infused with Gold Nanoparticles
<p><i>Other related links</i></p>	<p>The MD Anderson Cancer Center Melancon Lab</p>
<p><i>Graduate school(s) from which I received a degree(s).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MD Anderson Cancer Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Odyssey Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Imaging Physics, 2011 • MD Anderson UTHealth School of Biomedical Sciences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – PH.D. – Biomedical Science, 2007 • Ateneo de Manila University Manila, Philippines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – MS in Chemistry, 2000
<p><i>Family Life</i></p>	<p>Tess is married and has 2 children.</p>
<p><i>Undergraduate school(s) from which I received a degree(s).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of San Carlos Cebu City, Philippines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bachelor of Science in Chemistry, 1994
<p><i>High school from which I received a degree.</i></p>	<p>Cebu City National Science High School Cebu City, Philippines, 1990</p>

Want your story to be featured? [Click here](#) to complete the questionnaire.