

## **Patricia Walker**

I have always found scientific and intellectual challenges stimulating. In my previous career as a veterinary assistant I enjoyed many opportunities to use my knowledge and skills to solve problems and help others. During this time I recognized my desire to expand my medical knowledge and to work more directly with people. Eventually these interests led me to medical school.

During my third year of medical school I liked many aspects of each of my clinical rotations, but I found the role of the internist most closely matched my interests and abilities. The variety and complexity of the problems I encountered in my patients excited me and offered a satisfying intellectual opportunity for problem solving. The challenges of caring for patients on the medical wards stimulated my inquisitive nature and provided opportunities to use my strong organizational skills. I am detail oriented and I enjoyed managing the complexities of each case. I also enjoyed the opportunity to interact with a wide variety of specialists.

The most appealing aspect of internal medicine is the opportunities for close patient contact I found in this specialty. One of my main reasons for entering medicine was my desire to work closely with people. Opportunities to teach and counsel patients and families, to take a few moments to listen, and to provide personal assurance are important to me. I have been impressed by the strong personal commitment to patients I have encountered among internists.

Working with the elderly has always been interesting me. I feel that a career as an internist will provide me the fullest opportunity to serve this patient population. In my fourth year elective in geriatric medicine I observed the unique skills needed to effectively care for and communicate with the elderly, their families, and care givers. I am considering fellowship training in geriatric medicine following my internal medicine residency. My current career goals are to enter a clinical practice in general internal medicine with an emphasis on geriatrics.

Entering medical school after a previous career has provided special challenges, but has also given me a somewhat unique perspective and focus. My years of experience strengthened my leadership abilities and communication skills. I have learned the importance of sensitivity in all my interactions. My maturity has focused my energy and helped me cope with the long hours, frustrations, and awareness of limitations that are part of any rigorous learning environment.

As I look forward to continuing my training in internal medicine, I am looking for a residency program that will challenge me to continue to develop my skills, to build on my medical school experience, and reward my continuing desire to learn.