

pi-o-neer



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[pahy-uh-neer] Show IPA

-noun

1. a person who is among those who first enter or settle a region, thus opening it for occupation and development by others.
2. Dr. Brooke Jackson, M.D.

Dr. Brooke Jackson, M.D. comes from a family of educators. Her mother was a teacher, and her father was a physician who held the position of Chairman for the Department of Pathology at Howard University. More than anything Dr. Jackson's parents valued education, and instilled in her their ethics and morals. "My father was the first one in his family to go to college - go to med school. So I think he valued...they both valued education. I think for them 'not' getting a graduate degree was not an option.....certainly, (my) not going to college was not an option." Like her father, Dr. Jackson was the 'first' – a pioneer – in many areas of medicine.

Her decision to pursue dermatology at Georgetown University Medical School didn't come easy though. Dr. Jackson initially considered pursuing OBGYN, but soon realized that this field might not give her the career / life balance she sought. The story told by one OBGYN really stuck with her, essentially causing her to take stock of what she truly wanted to do. "I remember particularly one man, who was probably in his sixties, said, 'I have four children and I haven't seen a single one of them graduate from high school because I was delivering someone else's baby.'"

Her choice to enter dermatology not only gave Dr. Jackson the flexibility she desired, but allowed her to build on-going relationships through a diversity of patients and to utilize processes and procedures, two things she greatly enjoys. One of her mentors, Dr. John A. Kenney, Jr. played a big role in helping her define her specialty within the medical field. Dr. Kenney, who founded the department of dermatology at Howard University, was a friend of the family and served as a wonderful source of inspiration and information. With his guidance, Dr. Jackson completed her post graduate medical training, doing an internship in pediatrics at the University of Chicago and dermatology residency training at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit Michigan. While at Henry Ford Hospital, she blossomed under the leadership of Dr. Edward A. Krull, Chairman of Dermatology. His mentorship proved to be invaluable, influencing Dr. Jackson's decision

to seek a fellowship in lasers at Harvard University and become the first African American dermatologist awarded the honor. “The fellowship really gave me the opportunity to learn about...lasers and ethnic skin – actually at the time I was up there – that was not even a field. Most of the studies that they were doing at that time were on Caucasian patients.” After completing her formal training, Dr. Jackson remained at Harvard as a faculty member, until she left for her second fellowship in skin cancer surgery. At Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, she studied Mohs micrographic surgery and later founded the Mohs Surgery Unit at MD Anderson Cancer Center. “I loved my job in Houston...the patients. In particular when you walk into a hospital that is dedicated to cancer patients, it’s a very special place.”

Even with such a rewarding career, Dr. Jackson has had her share of challenges – because of both her race and gender. While demographics in medicine have started to shift and the field has a proportionate number of women, she still recalls times when her credentials were challenged. “There were a couple of instances when I actually entered the room and they either thought I was a nurse...or an orderly, even though I was wearing a long white coat that said Dr. Jackson.” But for her, giving up was not an option; a lesson that her parent’s love and endurance taught her.

Dr. Jackson is currently a board certified Dermatologist and Dermatologic Surgeon. She serves as a fellow of the American Academy of Dermatology and the American College of Mohs Micrographic Surgery and Cutaneous Oncology. As an expert in her field, Dr. Jackson writes, lectures and consults on lasers, ethnic skin and the prevention and treatment of skin cancer. Her devotion to dermatology is equally matched by her dedication to her husband and twin daughters. When she’s not spending quality time with her family she enjoys running, having finished eight marathons and six triathlons. Dr. Jackson is someone we can all admire and appreciate because of her many contributions and accomplishments.