“Curious Patty” doesn’t monkey around in hospital lab

Scientists are people who need to know… and then need to know more. When it comes to medicine, Lab Supervisor Patty Pebles loves the details, the tests, the reports — the science of it all.

It’s no accident or act of fate that Patty has a four year degree as a Medical Technologist from Gonzaga.

“I knew I wanted to do this since I was eight years old,” she smiles. A very curious young girl with severe allergies, Patty took a shine to the med tech who took care of her at an outpatient clinic.

“I couldn’t tell you her name today, but she made an impression. She was nice and I knew that she worked in a lab, which was not like a nurse. As I got older I looked into what the lab was all about,” and an insatiable scientist was born.

“Here in the lab you see the whole picture of a person being sick,” she says, noting this wouldn’t be entirely possible if she were at a large hospital.

“At urban hospitals, people specialize within the lab. Here, we do the whole spectrum of tests. We don’t specialize — we do it all and see all the results.” Seeing the results, and passing them on to the physicians is very rewarding. “You really see that your work makes a difference in people’s outcome.”

Patty says working with the doctor’s here is another reward to her career.

“I love the docs here,” she says. “For the most part, they’re nice, good to work with and very competent. If they weren’t, I would have probably moved on.”

Just how did Patty get to Davenport?

“By way of Albuquerque, New Mexico.”

Curious about the rest of the world, Patty set out to work in the Southwest for a change of scenery from the Spokane area. “It snowed there that winter and my furnace broke down,” she laments with a laugh. “I figured if I was going to put up with snow, I might as well come home.”

Upon landing back in Spokane, Patty was asked to be a vacation fill in for three weeks at Lincoln Hospital. A full-time opening came up while she was filling in, “and Dr. Sebesta came and talked to me about staying permanently.”

That was 1975. Throughout her nearly 30 year career here, Patty met and married Pat Pebles. The couple has two daughters and a son. “Davenport is a great place to raise kids and this job is a great job to work in with family life,” she admits.

Part of that family is her lab staff. “We have a very friendly department with really good people,” she says, laughing. “When you work in a little 9x16 foot room, you have to communicate well and be on good terms, which we are.”

That little nook called lab gets a lot of traffic. Patty says lab staff draws 500 people’s blood in a month (not counting running the tests for the clinic) and runs over 7,000 tests monthly.

“People coming here know they’re going to have blood drawn. We work hard to make them comfortable and are committed to making sure their lab results get to their doctor — that’s our customer service philosophy.” Details, details...