

• BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT •

Patients are family to Clinton family physician

By Katherine R. Dougan

Dr. David Wheat is happiest when he is in his Morrison Drive office treating patients, as he has been doing for thirty-eight years. On his days off, however, you might find



working shop, turning intricate wood on his lathe to create beautiful handmade pens.

"This is made of olive wood that came from Bethlehem," Wheat said, displaying a pen with an intricate pattern in the wood. Another pen he pulled from a desk drawer was made of black and white ebony. Another pen he displayed was made of West Indian Rosewood, and, on a bookshelf in his office, he displays a West Indian Rosewood box, which contained a vacuum tube inside of it. "I'm also a Ham radio operator," he explained, adding that he has made a few

Rosewood boxes with glass inserts and tubes in them as gifts for fellow Ham radio operators. Wheat says he can't remember when he decided to be a doctor. "My mother said I have always wanted to be a physician. We had family docs that were mentors to me. They delivered me, treated broken bones; did all the things that family docs do."

In addition to his years spent in medical school, Wheat attended three more years of residency to be

qualified to practice as a family physician.

At his practice, Clinton Family Care at 309 Morrison Drive, his wife of forty-one years, Sherry, works with him. They met when he had a graduate assistantship to pursue his master's degree at Mississippi State and was teaching anatomy and physiology to State students. Sherry was a student in his class.

Their paths crossed again when thousands of students gathered at the University of Mississippi Medical Center to have their pictures made.

"They had you write your name on pieces of cardboard to hold up when they took your pictures," Wheat explained. When Sherry picked up a piece of cardboard on which to write her name, David Wheat's name was on the flipside of her cardboard.

They were reacquainted again after Sherry was going to school and living with several girls in a house. Wheat went over with one of his classmates to the house, and was reintroduced to Sherry. They started dating, and got married at the end of David's sophomore year at medical school. Sherry earned her nursing degree and started working at the VA in Jackson.

Born in Stuttgart, Arkansas, Wheat went to Arkansas Tech in Russellville, where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree and earned a Senior Biology Fellow Scholarship. He attended graduate school at Mississippi State University, where he earned his master in science in physiology. He attended medical school at the University of Mississippi Medical School in Jackson.

He served his internship and resi-

dency in Anniston, Alabama, at Anniston Family Practice, which was an affiliate of the University Alabama-Birmingham. He has worked for Laird Clinic in Family Medicine in Starkville; as a part time Mississippi Foundation for Medical Care Peer Review Physician; at East Alabama Medical Center as a staff physician in the emergency room; in Med Control in Opelika, Alabama; and Hinds General Hospital in the emergency room and as a staff physician. He also served seventeen years as the sports physician at Central Hinds Academy.

He was Medical Director and Staff Physician for Methodist Family Practice in Clinton, and was asked to open the MEA Center in Clinton, which he designed; the architect used his drawings to construct the building.

He opened Clinton Family Care as owner and physician in 2001, where he plans to keep working.

"My practice fits my personality. I enjoy the variety of everything that I see. The people are what I love," he said.

The Wickets have two adult children, Brett and Sarah. Sarah is a lawyer working for Mission First, the pro bono arm of MC Law School, where she is also on the faculty.

Their son, Brett, has his drone license and currently works in construction. Both Brett and Sarah had their first plane ride when they were six weeks old.

Their four-year-old grandson, David, who is Sarah's son, had his first plane ride at three months old. A framed photo sits on the corner of Dr. Wheat's desk of grandpa and grandson, poised to take to the skies together.

him if you look up to the skies, because, when he isn't in his earth-bound office, Wheat could be flying his Cessna 182 Skyline.

"My passion is flying," Wheat said, adding that he has flown J-3 Cubs and T-38 Supersonics. He has a photo of himself posed with the T-38 Supersonic jet, which is a military plane. He has also flown a helicopter a couple of times.

In addition to his passion for practicing medicine and flying, Wheat enjoys spending time in his wood-

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