

# Matthew Keller, MD '05

New Alumni Association President

**M**att Keller, MD '05, makes a point of telling all his residents about something he calls a “second paycheck.” It’s not the kind of check that can be cashed at the bank or used to pay his mortgage or send his kids to college, but it’s the one he believes holds the most value.

“When you work in academic medicine, you’re not just taking care of the patient in front of you. By training new doctors, you’re also taking care of all the patients they will go on to care for in the future,” Keller says. “When I give residents confidence, they give better care—and that makes me happy. This ‘second paycheck’ is worth more than any reimbursement.”

Keller, associate professor in the Department of Dermatology and Cutaneous Biology and associate program director for Jefferson’s dermatology residency, knew he wanted to stay in an academic environment after finishing his medical degree. As a first-year resident at Jefferson, he told his attendings they needed to save an office for him, because he was never leaving. “I love teaching and am always trying to expand dermatological educational opportunities for our young doctors,” he says.

A focus on young doctors is also on Keller’s agenda as the new president of the SKMC Alumni Association; he aims to engage more recent graduates in Jefferson activities. “I want new grads to get in the habit of connecting with the institution year after year. It’s important to give, and it doesn’t even have to be monetarily. They can give in service ... by attending reunions ... by having prospective students stay with them during interviews. There are many, many ways.”

In addition to his teaching and Alumni Association leadership responsibilities, Keller maintains a busy Center City practice with a special expertise in psoriasis. Every Monday, he also runs the dermatology clinic at the

Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Wilmington, Del., and on Wednesdays he works at Christiana Care Health System’s Wilmington Hospital in an effort to expand academic care to that region.

“There is so much psychology that goes into dermatologic illness, because it’s right out in the open—everyone can see it. Dermatologists have to have real empathy for the way a disease affects their patients, physically and mentally. I talk to my patients about much more than their skin.”

This commitment to bonding with and counseling patients is something Keller believes sets Jefferson physicians apart from others. To put patients first is something he learned before his course work even started; he recalls that each presenter at his class’ White Coat Ceremony in 2001 emphasized the importance of compassionate, quality care.

“There’s something different about Jefferson doctors. When you meet someone who went to Jefferson, you just know it, even before they tell you,” Keller says.

Outside of work, Keller enjoys spending time with his wife, Karen, and their two sons. Weekends are spent traveling to the boys’ soccer games, visiting the beach and training for half-marathons. The family tries to get to Walt Disney World at least twice a year.

Keller jokes that he wears so many personal and professional hats, he has an entire closet for them. His newest hat, leader of the SKMC Alumni Association, is one he is particularly eager to put on.

“People don’t identify themselves as someone who just happened to go to Jefferson. They identify themselves as ‘Jeffersonians.’ I want to harness that and use it to grow the Association.”

—KAREN L. BROOKS

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