



**Katherine A. Worden, DO MS**  
**Board Certified NMM/OMM, FP and SPOCF**

To paraphrase Robert Kennedy, “If not us, who? If not now, when?” Osteopathic medical students, even myself at one time, have been asking their professors to “show me the research”. The 10-year Strategic Plan for Osteopathic Research set forward by Paul Standley, PhD, and Brian Degenhardt, DO, has challenged all of us to create a culture of research in osteopathic medicine. So how did one girl from a small Midwest town in the 70s, with no professional female role models, contribute to research in osteopathic medicine?

I had to work my way through school, which led me to be a CO-OP work student in Biology at a USDA research lab studying dsDNA fungal viruses. As a result, I received an NSF award to study virology at the U of Chicago. I worked on creating defective Herpes virus particles manipulated by recombinant DNA techniques to form probes to study the cancer promoter gene, Thymidine Kinase. Although I enjoyed being on the forefront of new knowledge, I missed interacting with people. I left to teach biology at a small college, but after a few years I missed the high level science. I found a way to satisfy both my science and non-science sides in osteopathic medicine.

I attended Michigan State U, doing student clerkships in Detroit and my internship at Riverside Osteopathic Hospital. After my family medicine residency, I joined a family practice, using OMT whenever I could. Opening my own OMM practice which became an integrated health center lead me to discover functional medicine (the founder being the son of a DO!). This lead me to work with Andrew Weil, MD, as a faculty member in the first Integrated Medicine Fellowship Program at U of AZ. I was part of a team that received a \$5 million NIH grant to start a pediatric integrated program including 2 research projects using OMT on children (results were published in 2007). Working with athletes in multiple sports taught me the unique ways injuries occur from the biomechanical challenges of each sport. I was blessed to have my greatest mentor, Phil Greenman, DO, FAAO, retire 1 mile down the street from my office to patiently answer my many questions, and help me with my toughest cases.

After 13 more years, I was ready for a new challenge and joined the clinical teaching faculty at Midwestern University AZCOM where I have been for 13 years. Because our OMM Dept. had never done a scientific poster, we learned from our Master’s degree colleagues how to create award-winning posters. I have been the AZCOM OMM Scholars (Fellows) Director for 9 years and use their youth and enthusiasm as the arms and legs for our faculty completing these posters. As the OMM Research Advisor, I started a series of research rotations for our OMM Scholars to help faculty learn by doing more clinical research projects. We also saw the wisdom of becoming part of the DO –Touch.NET practice-based research network, and have had 9 clinicians contribute to their studies. How cool to know we were a part of getting these done for our profession! Our next step is to increase our experience with clinical research, resulting in publications which help the research of our profession grow. I am proud to help teach the next generation of osteopathic educators to integrate research with scholarship and clinical skills for their students. We are all on the same road when it comes to research, but at different mile markers. The important step is just to start, wherever you are, and ask for help from colleagues and mentors.