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Beginnings

Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Sandee graduated from North Hills High School and then moved to Chicago, where she enrolled in a six-year Honors Program in Medical Education, receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in Medicine, followed by her MD degree. She completed her internship in obstetrics and her residency at Prentice Women's Hospital and Northwestern Memorial Hospital; both hospitals are affiliated with Northwestern University.

Sandee's original plan was to pursue a PhD in chemistry and to train as an anesthesiologist; however, when she began her rotation in obstetrics and gynecology and performed her first delivery, Sandee decided to switch specialties.

Embracing the challenge of reproductive endocrinology

During her residency in obstetrics and gynecology, Sandee found herself gravitating toward reproductive endocrinology. She noticed that, while reading the literature, those were the papers she read first. Sandee felt the research questions in reproductive endocrinology were exciting, challenging, and at the cutting edge of reproductive biology; indeed, it was around this time that Steptoe and Edwards reported the first successful case of in vitro fertilization, which revolutionized the treatment of infertile couples. Sandee completed her Fellowship in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility at the Michael Reese Hospital and University of Chicago Medical Center under the mentorship of Dr Antonio Scommegna. This training proved to be the foundation for a rise to prominence in the subspecialty, and Sandee has always kept a broad view of our discipline. She embraced the treatment of a patient on the journey from infertility (with in vitro fertilization) all the way to the delivery room. She takes pride in continuing to practice obstetrics concurrently while being a subspecialist in reproductive endocrinology and infertility.

Dr Sandra Carson served as an Editor of the *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology* (AJOG), and the Editors are grateful for her many contributions to the Journal. Herein, we profile her distinguished career, accomplishments, and contributions to obstetrics and gynecology as well as to AJOG. Sandee, a reproductive endocrinologist, is currently the Vice President for Education of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG).

Mentors

Sandee credits Drs John Brewer, Albert Gerbie (former Editor of AJOG), John Sciarra, and Scommegna with playing important roles in her training. Dr Brewer, former Editor-in-Chief of AJOG, encouraged Sandee to write her first paper, a case report of an appendiceal perforation caused by a copper 7 intrauterine device, subsequently published in AJOG in 1981.¹ Dr John Sciarra, Chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Northwestern University, also contributed to Sandee's training. Sandee has not forgotten that, while performing her first postpartum tubal ligation with Dr Sciarra during her residency, she accidentally cut him with the scalpel. Sandee recalls telling Dr Sciarra she had never cut an attending before. With his characteristic aplomb, he looked at Sandee calmly and replied, "Well, Sandee, you're starting at the very top of the department."

Sandee also acknowledges Dr Scommegna, a distinguished physician/scientist who made significant scientific contributions to the field of reproductive endocrinology, as a mentor. She is very proud to have been selected to deliver the first Antonio Scommegna Lecture in 2005.

A distinguished career in academic obstetrics and gynecology

Sandee's first faculty position was her appointment as an Assistant Professor at the University of Chicago's Pritzker School of Medicine. She then moved to the University of Tennessee's College of Medicine in Memphis, where she became Chief of In Vitro Fertilization and Embryo Transfer. Subsequently, Sandee was invited to join the faculty at the Baylor College of Medicine as the Director of the Assistive Reproductive Technology Program; she was later appointed Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology. In 2007, Sandee became Director of the Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility at Brown University, where she served for nearly six years until joining the leadership of the ACOG as Vice President for Education.

An accomplished investigator

With more than 140 peer-reviewed publications, Sandee has made important contributions to virtually every aspect of our field (diagnosis and medical treatment of ectopic pregnancy; postmenopausal hormone replacement therapy; systematic studies of sperm morphology, motility, and concentration of male infertility; polycystic ovary syndrome; intracytoplasmic sperm injection; and preimplantation genetic diagnosis, among others).

Sandee has an impressive track record as an investigator, and she has served as a Principal Investigator in the Reproductive Medicine Network of the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, as well as in other National Institutes of Health-funded studies, focusing on the genetics of familial polycystic ovarian disease and the treatment of this condition. Sandee's research has also been funded through both university and industry grants.

While at Brown University, Sandee was the recipient of a grant awarded by the Rhode Island Science and Technology Advisory Council to develop an artificial human ovary that would

mature human oocytes. Sandee and her collaborators demonstrated that such a 3-dimensional model could be created in a Petri dish and used to study oocyte maturation and the effect of environmental toxins.² In 2010, the project was chosen as one of the “Top 10 Medical Breakthroughs” in the United States by *Time* magazine³ and the “Innovation of the Year” in Rhode Island. This project led to an invention secured by a patent now licensed to screen for reproductive toxins. Sandee expressed her satisfaction with this project, mainly because of its possibilities to help women preserve their fertility, and, more importantly, because it holds promise to promote insight into the workings of the ovary. Importantly, Sandee holds 14 patents for devices used in surgery, infertility, and reproductive health.

Broad leadership in obstetrics and gynecology

A charismatic leader, Sandee has served as the President of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (2002–2003); Officer at the Society for Gynecologic Investigation (Secretary/Treasurer, 1995–1998); Program Chair and Elected Vice President of ACOG (2006–2007); and as a Member of the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology as well as Head of the Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility and Vice President of the Board. Sandee has also served as a Member of the Advisory Council of the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development/ National Institutes of Health and Chair of the Food and Drug Administration Advisory Committee for Reproductive Health Drugs.

These appointments—her leadership in obstetrics and gynecology, professional societies, and agencies of the federal government for which she has been a consultant or advisor—are testimony to the high regard in which Sandee is held by her peers. Her thoughtful, informed, and fair-minded positions on a wide range of issues have earned Sandee a position of respect and admiration in our discipline.

Sandee: AJOG Editor

When Sandee was appointed as an Editor of AJOG, she strengthened our content in reproductive endocrinology and infertility and developed two popular sections: *Surgeon's Corner* and *Imaging Reports*. She recalls that the value of case reports was once discussed at the Editors' meeting, and her view was that astute observations derived from the diagnosis or treatment of a single patient could prompt important investigations. Sandee also believes that imaging is a powerful, essential tool in clinical obstetrics and gynecology, and she fostered AJOG's presence in imaging. She believes that, as our discipline evolves, the results of physical examination are virtually always confirmed by imaging; hence, imaging has become central to the modern case report. Sandee played an active role in our Editors' meetings for eight years until her appointment as Vice President for Education of ACOG.

Family, personal interests, and ongoing projects

Sandee resides in the greater Washington, DC area, and has two grown sons—Scott, a psychiatrist on the faculty of the University of Denver, and Reid, an assistant principal in St.

Louis. Sandee enjoys the poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley, and she has an eclectic appreciation for art.

As Vice President for Education of ACOG, Sandee plays a major role in the annual clinical meeting, and she will be directing ACOG's first National Summit on Women's Health in our discipline. This summit will address critical issues, such as the current meaning of specialization in obstetrics and gynecology, the contents of core curriculum for our residency training, the role of proficiency-based training, and other important issues impacting the future of our discipline.

In closing

The Editors of AJOG express our profound appreciation for Sandee's many contributions to the Journal, commitment to support its authors, and her forward-looking approach. We welcome Sandee's leadership at ACOG and are pleased she will continue to have an important role in shaping our discipline.

Supplementary Material

Refer to Web version on PubMed Central for supplementary material.

Biography

PORTRAIT

Sandra A. Carson, MD

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