



The American Society of Cosmetic
Dermatology & Aesthetic Surgery
(ASCDAS) Presents...

ASCDAS Physician Profile



Dr. Helen M. Torok,
treasurer of ASCDAS

*Best thing
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I was born in Heilbronn, West Germany, in a war camp for displaced people, where life and circumstances were in disarray. My family and I moved to 9 different camps during the 10 years that we lived in Germany. We found ourselves extremely fortunate to have the Catholic Relief Services sponsor us to emigrate to the United States. We arrived on January 13, 1957, via Ellis Island and then moved to Cleveland, Ohio. We traveled with 1 suitcase for the 5 of us.

Name: Helen M. Torok, MD

College: Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio (BS, biology). A very generous grant from the university made it possible for me to attend classes.

Medical school: Ohio State College of Medicine, Columbus

Residency/fellowship: Internal medicine (2 years), Akron General Medical Center, Ohio; dermatology (3 years), Case Western Reserve University

Current practice: Private practice in Medina, Ohio, for 29 years, with Dr. Julie Mark (dermatologist), Dr. Patrick Killian (Mohs surgeon), and 2 physician assistants

Greatest accomplishment: I consider becoming a US citizen at the age of 16 years to be the most important. The second most important is marrying my husband, Dr. Leonard Torok, and raising 3 children.

Most important mentor in my life: Dr. Ed Lowney, who was chief of dermatology at Ohio State University. He convinced me to

pursue dermatology rather than obstetrics/gynecology, and I am indebted to him for this. I am also grateful to Dr. Beno Michel, who was chief of dermatology at Case Western Reserve University, for giving me the opportunity to be included in his residency program.

Favorite quote: "Good is the enemy of great" (Jim Collins). If we become complacent with "good," we will not strive to go above and beyond.

Favorite fun thing to do: Garden and travel.

Favorite place to be or go: Having been born in Europe, it took 40 years to go back and visit for the first time since coming to the United States. I now enjoy visiting Europe, especially on riverboat cruises.

Best thing about being a dermatologist:

No 2 days are ever identical. The vast array of skin disorders that we see on a daily basis, coupled with lasers, fillers, and cosmetic procedures, makes for a very exciting practice.

Favorite cosmetic dermatology procedure: I enjoy sculpting and augmenting lips. I love giving my patients beautiful lips.

In another life, I would be... A translator or a linguist. I love languages and speak fluent Polish and some German. My mother spoke Russian to us, and we learned this language when we were children.

If I had one wish, it would be... To be able to work into my 80s in my dermatology practice; the life of a dermatologist is one I truly enjoy. ■