What led you to become a geriatrician?
My early research interests included cancer biology, neurology, and immunology, and an early mentor challenged me to pursue these interests in the fields of aging research and geriatric medicine. I enjoy the stories that each of my older patients shares and working as part of a team to care for them.

What is your philosophy of care?
I am devoted to the holistic, evidence-based care and support of my patients and their caregivers. My clinical mission is to help my patients achieve their healthcare goals through promoting a healthy lifestyle and preventing diseases. I am committed to medical education and training the next generation of caregivers for my older patients.

I am working to understand not only why this is happening, but also what we can do to prevent or reverse muscle aging.

What does your average day look like?
Most days, I am in the lab, working with my research team, focusing on trying to understand why we become weaker as we age. I spend one day each week in the UCLA Geriatrics Clinic in Westwood. A few months each year, I am the supervising physician on the inpatient service at UCLA Medical Center, Santa Monica or UCLA Ronald Reagan Medical Center.

What do you see as the biggest challenges in your field of research?
One of our biggest challenges is moving exciting findings made in model organisms such as flies, worms, and mice to the clinic. UCLA is a leader in translational research and I hope that my background in basic biogerontology will bolster that aspect of the Division of Geriatrics. Another challenge is making sure I can continue to get grant funding to continue my research. My research work revolves around writing grants, doing my research, and publishing my results. There is much to do.

What are your professional roles and activities?
I am primarily a researcher; 75% of my time is spent on investigating the biology of aging. I study why we become weaker as we age, with a focus on mitochondria, the powerhouses in our cells that generate energy. I am working to understand not only why this is happening, but also what we can do to prevent or reverse muscle aging. I am also a geriatrician, providing primary care to a small panel...
of older individuals, and attending on the geriatrics service at UCLA Medical Center, Santa Monica. When visiting with my patients, I am reminded of the importance of my research. Many of us face challenges with our muscle strength and function as we age, to the point where often we are not able to continue the activities we enjoy. Muscle aging is an under-recognized problem in medical care, but one where we may soon have more effective interventions.

What is your wish list?
I have three levels of wishes. The first is support for trainees in my laboratory including a future physician-scientist like myself. My second level is to have funding for specialized research equipment for our work on muscle aging and weakness. The third level of support is an Endowed Chair. My clinical work, which informs my research, and trainee mentorship are not supported by my research funding and this is the best way to support my passion for this essential work.

What do you wish other people knew about the field of geriatrics?
Many recent healthcare innovations, e.g. patient-centered care, providing a medical home, team-based care, care for chronic diseases, and end of life care have long been ensconced in geriatrics and our holistic, team-based approach continues to drive advances in medicine.

Tell us a little about yourself.
Outside of my research and clinical work, I enjoy life in Southern California with my wife, Janina, and sons, Henry and Findley. The boys enjoy hiking and visiting museums from Temescal Canyon to the Noah’s Ark exhibit at Skirball, and Descanso Gardens to Leo Carrillo Beach.