

ASHI MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS



Anajane Smith, MA
Program Manager Interdisciplinary
Research
University of Texas Arlington

Graduated from: University of California
Berkeley

How long have you been an ASHI

member? Over 30 years

Where was the ASHI meeting held the first time you attended? My first ASHI meeting was in 1987 in New York City, following the 10th International Histocompatibility Workshop. That was my first introduction to the national and international HLA community. I was particularly impressed by the atmosphere of inclusiveness and diversity. Of course, I came to learn that diversity is an implicit aspect of HLA.

What made you decide to work in HLA? In the early 1980s, I was working as a research technologist in the Human Immunogenetics Program at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center (FHCRC) when John Hansen invited me to learn the, then novel, DNA technology for HLA typing. The more I learned about HLA, the more interesting it became. Wow! Genetic diversity, impact on human health, anthropology/population genetics, and human evolution all rolled up together in HLA.

Most rewarding aspect: Working in the Clinical Immunogenetics Laboratory to implement FHCRC hematopoietic cell transplant outcomes research on patient-donor matching was especially rewarding. I look forward to more opportunities to have a positive impact on human health in my new UTA position working with Florence P. Haseltine and Jon A. Weidanz.

Fun fact: I enjoy being outdoors taking daily walks where ever I am. I especially enjoyed going kayaking from my previous home near the Florida gulf coast. I love Monet's impressionistic paintings and was very recently introduced by a close friend to acrylic painting.



Zohreh Tatari-Calderone
Staff Scientist
Sidra Medicine

Graduated from: University of Paris Diderot

How long have you been an ASHI member? 2 years

Where was the ASHI meeting held the first time you attended? My very first participation in an ASHI meeting was during my Ph.D. training. I was very excited to meet all the famous researchers that I knew only by their names on their publications. I remember during the gathering and reception, I wanted to talk with members, but it felt like they belonged to this big HLA family, and I felt intimidated. It motivated me over the years and growing up in the field I could develop relationships and collaborations with many experts and feel supported by them in my research.

What made you decide to work in HLA? I can say it was a hazard of good fortune. I needed to find a hands-on training for my master's degree. My first interview was with Pr. Laurent Degos in the historical building of Saint Louis Hospital in Paris, who accepted me in his research lab despite my lack of experience. Later, I continued my Ph.D. training under the mentorship of Pr. Dominique Charron, in Jean Dausset's laboratories working on the role of HLA-Cw in the outcome of UBMT in collaboration with Pr. Elian Gluckman. I will always be thankful to them for their mentorship and transmitting to me their passion for clinical histocompatibility.

Most rewarding aspect: It was rewarding to know that my work on HLA-C compatibility between donor and recipient helped mitigate some of the complications after UBMT. In my current position at Sidra Medicine, it is incredibly gratifying to see that I am helping to draw a detailed profile of the immunogenetics landscape of the Qatari population in the context of the Qatar Genome Project that will be crucial for the implementation of UBMT and gene/cell therapy in Qatar, as well as the study of prevalent autoimmune diseases in this population.

Fun fact: I enjoy working in an intellectually stimulating and rewarding multicultural environment and collaborating with experts of diverse fields. The challenges of a modern multicultural work environment are different prioritizations, work ethics, time zones, and of course, "never enough" time. In my spare time, I enjoy rescuing animals, gardening, long walks, a cup of coffee, and just staying home and spending time with my family.



Crystal Bynum
Certified Histocompatibility Technologist
University of Alabama at Birmingham
Hospital

Graduated from: University of Alabama

How long have you been an ASHI member? 4 years

What made you decide to work in HLA? Upon graduation, I was already working as a Medical Laboratory Technician as a generalist. I had a desire to specialize and I also wanted to do DNA testing. Then I noticed this laboratory was hiring. I did some research and became renewed in my sense of purpose. After speaking with the manager, I knew this was the field for me.

Most rewarding aspect: The most rewarding aspect of my work is seeing the patients recover and get a second chance at life. I frequently meet people that have known people who have been transplanted and have a restored vitality of life. I'm humbled and grateful that I am a part of that process. It makes this career so intrinsically rewarding.

Fun fact: A fun fact about me is that I enjoy traveling to any beach or place there are large bodies of water. I also like sewing for people as gifts or upon request. Pretty much, I enjoy any outdoor activities. I majorly dislike spiders.