

Get to Know Dr. X. Alexis Driggs

Dr. X. Alexis Driggs is joining The Memorial Hospital's team of expert physicians. She brings leading-edge skills and experience to the TMH surgical team, and will be offering a variety of general surgeries to the community.



Was there a compelling moment in your life that made you want to become a doctor?

As a high school student, I had a major accident while hiking near Rock Canyon, Utah. A large boulder broke loose and struck me, and I had to be airlifted out of the canyon to nearby medical facilities. I broke my femur and needed surgical reconstruction on the muscles in my right arm. I spent several days in the hospital, and went through a long recovery. It was a life-changing time for me, and it influenced the course of my life. Prior to the injury I was planning to be a teacher, but the experience made me want to go into medicine. I started out in nursing, and worked as a nurse, but then I felt I needed to go back to school and become a doctor.

Where did you receive your medical training, and what stood out from that experience?

I attended medical school at the University of California in San Francisco, and I completed my general surgery residency at the Alameda County Medical Center in Oakland, California. Working in such an inner-city setting, I was always on my toes. I ran four trauma bays at the same time and performed surgeries daily on patients with multiple gunshot wounds or motor vehicle injuries. Often, English was not a patient's first language—with some people literally coming straight to the hospital from a foreign country with advanced tumors. There was so much diversity in what I saw, and it really made me think outside the box, but at the end of the day it was the similarities between people and their situations that stood out, not the differences.

I understand you do all types of general surgeries—from head and neck to gall bladder, hernia, breast and more—but can you talk about special training or interests?

I really enjoy doing all kinds of surgeries, but in medical school I started out studying obstetrics and gynecology. I had been a labor and delivery nurse for years, and I thought it was what I wanted to do. Yet during my training, I found myself really enjoying the surgery aspect of my OB/GYN training the most. I realized I wanted to operate on all areas of the body, and all ages of patients, so I switched to general surgery.

As a resident, I had the good fortune of working with highly-skilled laparoscopic surgeons, so I learned their 100 little tips and tricks to expertly perform minimally invasive surgery, like angling the instrument just right or holding your wrist in a certain way. I coauthored articles and presentations on laparoscopic surgery during that time.

Let's go back in time: where did you grow up? I grew up on a Navajo reservation in Kayenta, Arizona. It was a small town of 5000 people. I was one of 10 children. As a family, we went all over Arizona camping and hiking. My dad was a Scoutmaster, so we were all in Scout programs.

Do you have a family of your own? Yes, my husband's name is Tim and he works in computers. We have four children, two boys and two girls from the ages of 4 to 14: Emily, Thomas, Kimberly and Tyler.

Why are you looking forward to working at The Memorial Hospital? When I visited, I was really struck by how friendly and down-to-earth people were in Craig and at the hospital. Being in Craig also means we will be closer to my parents, who live in Utah. We are also looking forward to the outdoor activities the area has to offer—skiing, hiking, repelling, and simply playing in the snow as there isn't much snow in Northern California where we've spent much of our last several years. I am anxiously awaiting July 30, 2014—my first day as part of the TMH medical team.

