

How I Got Into Histology Story

By: Philicia Friedman



I graduated college at Concordia University, Irvine in 2011. My goal was to pursue a dental career. I realized quickly that was not the avenue I was going to take.

Lacking direction, I worked at a restaurant and began applying to different lab positions at the University of Utah hospital. Later that fall, a family friend who is Dermatopathologist, told me that I should apply to become a Histology Technician at the University of Utah. I had to look up what Histology Technicians did. At the time, there were no openings for the lab, but I wanted to my put foot in the door. I took a job as a Health Information Technician working in the chartroom. Eventually there was an opening in the lab. Unfortunately, I had to stay at my job for 6 months before I could transfer. I wanted the

histology job so bad that during those 6 months I volunteered in the lab after work. My volunteer hours paid off and I got the position. I wanted to absorb as much as I could and learn every aspect of histology. I was fascinated by the entire process and wanted to understand all aspects of the department. I became a grosser for three years. I dabbled in cutting on the microtome as well as embedding tissue. I also learned the administration side of the department.

I started training in Mohs and enjoyed the variety that this position gave me. Over the years as a grosser, I developed contact urticaria to formaldehyde. This allergy gave me headaches, rashes and constant sneezing causing me to be taken out of the dermatopathology lab. Fortunately, I was able to work solely in Mohs. I developed my skills as a Mohs technician for 4 years. I am now the lead trainer for new histology technicians that want to learn Mohs. I travel to different University clinics which gives work diversity as well as a change of environment. I travel to the Huntsman Cancer Institute where we use immunohistochemical stains on our frozen sectioning. We use the antibodies Mart-1 and Sox10 on our fresh tissue. I have been able to familiarize myself with this machine giving me other skillsets. I joined the National Society for Histotechnology earlier this year and have been utilizing all the resources that they provide.

I am also in the process of studying for my certification to become a Histotechnologist. I never thought I would love my job as much as I did when I started. I have an amazing team and I am constantly learning new things. I have placed myself in new situations regardless of unfamiliar tasks that may be uncomfortable to me. I never regretted those decisions.