Alumni – Nickelson Hem/Onc

Audio	Video
[Silence]	Dark blue background with animated blocks. L S U Health Shreveport Foundation logo is at the bottom center of the screen. White text in center of screen: Hematology / Oncology
[Dr. Nickelson] My name is Robert Nickelson. I graduated in 1980 and completed internal medicine, followed by an oncology fellowship, graduated in 1985. I went three years into private practice in Alexandria before returning to the medical school for 13 years in 2001. I left the medical school and developed the program, the oncology program at Willis Knighton Medical Center.	Older man with short cropped hair on the sides of his head. He is wearing gray scrubs with his name in pink font on his left chest. He is sitting in front of a dark blue washed background Text: Robert Nickelson, M D Hematology / Oncology – Breast Oncology Willis-Knighton Cancer Center
[Silence]	Dark blue background with animated blocks. L S U Health Shreveport Foundation logo is at the bottom center of the screen. White text above it reads: Why did you choose Hematology / Oncology?
[Dr. Nickelson] I think primarily it was the the science. At that point in time, Anatomy, of course, was was still center stage for a lot of people, a lot of time spent on anatomy and biochemistry and towards the mid to later part of the eighties, the development of molecular biology and pathways. And I was always enamored with pathways and receptors and effector mechanisms and it just seemed to be a lot more interesting, which primarily was oncology and hematology at that time.	Dr. Nickelson on camera
[Silence]	Dark blue background with animated blocks. L S U Health Shreveport Foundation logo is at the bottom center of the screen. White text above it reads: What do you enjoy most about Hematology / Oncology?

Audio	Video
[Dr. Nickelson] I think the thing I enjoy the most is interacting with patients. They are unique. As I said, they have a definable problem and helping them to go through the diagnosis of cancer and the treatment. It takes a very special individual to be able to do that in a satisfactory way. There are plenty of people who can treat - I tell this to the students. Anybody can treat a patient in any specialty. It's the healing aspect where you become a doctor - into a physician. The healing aspect includes the psychological status and the physical status of the patient. We did not dwell much on that in our medical school curricula, but it it defines the better physicians.	Dr. Nickelson on camera
[Silence]	Dark blue background with animated blocks. L S U Health Shreveport Foundation logo is at the bottom center of the screen. White text above it reads: What is the hardest thing about Hematology / Oncology?
[Dr. Nickelson] I guess the hardest thing is, of course, losing patients And that's - when I started out was fairly frequent. We basically had six or eight drugs and they basically didn't work. And over time, with the advent of molecular biology, we we now have 90 different drugs in a variety of different situations, immunotherapy, hormonal therapy, a traditional cytotoxic chemotherapy. And that's probably the the biggest aspect.	Dr. Nickelson on camera
[Silence]	Dark blue background with animated blocks. L S U Health Shreveport Foundation logo is at the bottom center of the screen. White text above it reads: Are there certain personality traits that fit your specialty?

Audio	Video
[Dr. Nickelson] I don't know that there are personality traits. I think that the individual has to be very well grounded, has to have a variety of life experiences. That sounds kind of corny, but if you don't have life experiences, you really can't interact with people who are dying. You don't understand the depths of their despair. You don't understand the pain that they're going through, both psychological pain and physical pain. If you don't understand the difference between the two, which we've not done a good job of teaching in medical school for years, you're really not doing them a service. But I think a well-grounded and well-rounded individual who has many life experiences is the most important.	Dr. Nickelson on camera
[Silence]	Dark blue background with animated blocks. L S U Health Shreveport Foundation logo is at the bottom center of the screen. White text above it reads: How is your work life balance?
[Dr. Nickelson] I'm from a much earlier era and basically medicine was first. The family was subservient to medicine. People - When I went into private practice in Alexandria, people did not take vacations. If you said you want a vacation, all the older people looked at you like, What's wrong with you? And so the first part of my career, basically with the very strong spouse that I have, she was able to to manage the home and and our many children and so forth. And then as things have gone on, I do take a little time off now and then, but still, it's mainly work oriented. Younger people today are more interested in work life balance. I mean, that that's fine if you can achieve it. It is extremely difficult to achieve it without sacrificing one for the other.	Dr. Nickelson on camera
[Silence]	Dark blue background with animated blocks. L S U Health Shreveport Foundation logo is at the bottom center of the screen. White text above it reads: How do you handle work stress?

Audio	Video
[Dr. Nickelson] So I've always exercised. And even in in college I ran. Through medical school, ran in the graveyard over there and got in trouble. But we were turned in one time by a by a grieving widow that my running partner and I were in the cemetery with no shirts on. And she found that very offensive. And so she called the medical school and we got called to the principal's office and told act accordingly in the cemetery, whatever that is. (Laughter) So I think that that's that's one thing. The other, I think you have to develop a sense of mindfulness. There are many books available, I guess a series by the Buddhist monk, Than, T H A N, looking at being in the moment at every point in time, including when you're at home, you're at home when you're at work, you're at work. When I go home, work is gone. I don't discuss patients. I don't discuss individual problems. I mean, my wife's a nurse. We may discuss an interesting case or something, but, but basically I leave work at work. And same thing with children. With my children or grandchildren. I'm with them. Period. End of sentence. I'm not thinking about work or thinking about anything else.	Dr. Nickelson on camera
[Silence]	Dark blue background with animated blocks. L S U Health Shreveport Foundation logo is at the bottom center of the screen. White text above it reads: What do you wish you had known before choosing your specialty?

Audio	Video
[Dr. Nickelson] I think for the for the students is you have to experience each of your rotations and and go in with an open mind, determine what they do. You have to decide, of course, initially whether you want to be an academic or you want to be in private practice. Once you made that decision, it's a little easier. But but you have to look at each specialty and determine what it is. And then if it interests you. If if there are certain aspects that interest you, then maybe it's worth checking into. Maybe it's worth calling somebody in town and say, Hey, Doc Nicholson, you know, I really like this this breast thing or Hem/Onc or whatever. Can I come and spend some time with you? I mean, most of the physicians in town are open to that. People did it for us, and we're passing it on to the next generation of physicians. And that gives them - it gives an individual a little better idea of what exactly we do.	Dr. Nickelson on camera
[Silence]	Dark blue background with animated blocks. L S U Health Shreveport Foundation logo is at the bottom center of the screen. White text above it reads: What advice do you have for medical students interested in Hematology / Oncology?

Audio	Video
[Dr. Nickelson] I think for any specialty and I would I would say to the students, do not choose your specialty based on your relationship with a faculty member. I mean, you have to remember, faculty members are looking for fellows or looking for individuals for the program. They are scouting you the first two years. Maybe they'll invite you to some extracurricular activities over to their home, so forth and so on. Example that I have was was Dr. Ronald George. I was enamored with Dr. George as a student. A tremendous intellectual could discourse on art, on science, on literature. I mean, he's everything I wanted to be and wasn't. And when it came time to make the final decision on subspecialty, I sat down and I looked at pulmonary, and the more I looked at it, the worse it was. I mean, bronchoscopies every day, running to the I C U. Most of your patients in the I C U intubated, you don't really interact with them. It didn't seem to be quite as much fun. And I realized my attraction was Dr. George, who was easily attracted to. But but when you make that decision, make sure that you based it on what you want or what you find attractive in that specialty and not individuals in the specialty.	Dr. Nickelson on camera
[Silence]	Dark blue background with animated blocks. L S U Health Shreveport Foundation logo is at the top center of the screen. Text in gold and white font reads: Special thanks to Doctor Robert A. Nickelson, Hematology / Oncology, L S U Health Shreveport Class of 19 80. Hematology / Oncology Associates, W K Cancer Center, 26 hundred Kings Highway, Suite 3 4 0, Shreveport, Louisiana 7 1 1 0 3