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People
of the
Year

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of **Modern Family
Medicine Main Line,**
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Modern Adventure



Amanda Dougherty, the chief executive of **Modern Family Medicine Main Line**, carved out an untraditional path to the proverbial top of the mountain.

AMANDA DOUGHERTY ATTRIBUTES HER ZEAL FOR SUCCESS TO THE CLOSEST FRIEND SHE'S EVER HAD—**NAMELY, HER GRANDFATHER.** He was executive vice president of Bryn Mawr Trust Company, and some of Dougherty's earliest memories of him stem from him working in his home office, logging onto AOL.

Although he passed away in 2014, the life lessons he taught her remain clear in her mind.

"I watched his work ethic, and I asked him, 'How many pennies do I need to buy a house?'" she says. He, in turn, impressed upon her the importance of her name. "He said to me, 'Your name is going to change something.' So I've been very prideful about that."

Today, Dougherty brings that pride and drive to her work as chief financial officer and chief operating officer of Modern Family Medicine Main Line in Bryn Mawr. In these positions, Dougherty oversees the practice's financial, marketing, and administrative operations, as well as day-to-day patient care, employee engagement, and strategizing team meetings. She works closely with David Ho, M.D., and a staff devoted to providing primary care services with personal attention and a modern touch.

"When patients come here, I don't want it to feel like a doctor's office," she says. "When they come in, we don't ask about copays; we ask them about their vacation. That's how I am, and that's how I train our staff to be."

It was clear from a young age that Dougherty would make her own path in the world. A self-described "typical middle child," Dougherty grew up in Delaware County with her parents, Susan and Jack Dougherty, and two siblings—an older brother and a younger sister. As a student of Archbishop John Carroll High School, she garnered national media attention by challenging the archdiocese's policy that all prom attendees must have dates.

After graduation, she was expected to follow in her brother's footsteps by going to college. She enrolled in Kutztown University, though she lasted only one semester.

"I knew something wasn't right," she recalls. "I didn't tell anyone, but I packed up my entire dorm and drove home."

The abrupt change of plans aside, Dougherty hardened her determination to succeed. She had a specific goal in mind: "to make six figures before age 30." Driven by her passion for education, she enrolled in cosmetology school, eventually getting her instructor's license, and worked in salons and as a nanny. Then, one day her mother called her asking for help with a computer system at a primary care medical office she was opening with her husband, Dr. Ho.

"I walked into a very small office with two exam rooms and one office where my mom was setting up," she recalls. "As I powered on her computer I asked her, 'Just out of curiosity, who else works here?' She replied, 'We don't know yet.' I just remembering laughing and thinking: *You don't know?* She then in turned and asked me if I wanted to help."

At first, Dougherty wasn't so sure. She

had no formal background in medical administration, finance, or business. On the other hand, she saw the challenge as an opportunity to build something from the ground up. So she dove in, answering phones, interacting with patients, and learning the ins-and-outs of running a medical practice. Soon the office was so busy that she needed to enlist the expertise of a friend, Roxi Sarkahian.

"Roxi and I shared one little desk by the bathroom," Dougherty says. "We literally sat arm to arm. We thought it was normal."

After two years, Dr. Ho branched out to start Modern Family Medicine Main Line, which Dougherty joined as office manager. Despite her experience, she was still nervous.

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"I was so young and a woman in a profession traditionally dominated by men," says Dougherty. Her first hire was her best friend's mom. "I was very on the fence about that decision because I thought: *Either I'm going to lose my friend, or I'm going to just become closer with her family.* Thankfully, the second happened."

Dougherty has since helped build Modern Family Medicine into a \$2.5 million practice, overseeing a staff of 10. Having grown up with siblings, she loves tapping into her "big-sister energy" to nurture and guide her employees.

"I tell them all the time, 'I'm your friend; I'm not your boss,'" says Dougherty. "I think that's very important, and I think they respect me a lot more for that."

She also utilizes her love of education, challenging each member of the staff to focus on how they can improve patient interactions. She gains inspiration from her favorite team, the Philadelphia Eagles, by incorporating encouraging videos in her PowerPoint presentations and developing weekly

challenges for the whole office.

"I think it's important to take time to reflect," Dougherty says. "At the practice, we're always looking forward to the next day, the next week. I like to make sure we are also looking backwards, to see what we can learn together as a team."

Dougherty is grateful for the excellence of her colleagues, some of whom, like Sarkahian, have gone on to become medical professionals. She is also grateful for the opportunity to create inventive ways to serve patients' medical needs, including developing a drive-thru program for flu vaccinations that originated during the pandemic.

As the company's chief executive, she appreciates the fact that she no longer has to share an office—well, only on the rarest of occasions. "Some days I come in and my mother is sitting here," she says with a laugh.

When Dougherty isn't at the office, she stays active in the community. She is a proud member of the Main Line Chamber of Commerce, works with the Domestic Abuse Project of Delaware County, and oversees the practice's collection of donations to the Media Food Bank. At her home in New Jersey, she spends time with her two rescue dogs: Zeus, a Shar-Pei/boxer mix; and an adorable dachshund-chihuahua mix named Jimmy Chew. She also attends St. Michael's Church in St. Clare of Assisi Parish, and is an advocate for mental health.

Surely her grandfather would be delighted by her many accomplishments—among them, a rewarding career as the leader of a thriving medical practice, a beautiful home, and yes, a six-figure salary before the age of 30.

Reflecting on her trajectory so far, Dougherty understands why many people would be tempted to say she did things backwards. She sees it differently.

"Considering how my life has played out for me, I believe that everything has happened for a reason," she says. "I can't wait to see what comes next." ■

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