1. What do you do at UMHS?
I spend most of my time treating patients with orbital problems such as Graves’ Eye Disease and trying to investigate this disease in the lab. Patients afflicted with the disease can undergo devastating changes of the tissues around the eyes resulting in disfigurement, double vision and in some cases blindness. I came to U-M to establish a thyroid eye disease center. The mission is to provide patient-focused multidisciplinary care and spur interdisciplinary research efforts.

2. Why is this interesting to you?
For me, I have the rare opportunity to make an impact in the near term by treating patients and helping them through this difficult process by performing orbital and facial reconstructive surgery. Through research, I have the opportunity to contribute to the development of new drugs or insight in the disease.

3. What are the practical implications for health care?
My goal is to always think of practical implications for patient care and research. Currently our investigations of the immune system have led to the development of novel anti-inflammatory agents that we will begin to test in clinical trials. Most importantly, our goal is to advance patient care for those afflicted with thyroid eye disease.

4. When you’re not working, what do you do?
Often you’ll find me cycling the roads of Ann Arbor. I have discovered the dirt roads of the area and have adapted to cyclo-cross biking. The joy is biking all year round especially in the winter using studded snow tires.

5. What moment in the classroom stands out as the most memorable?
In medical school, listening to my eventual Ph.D. advisor describe how cancer develops as a stepwise molecular process. On a personal level my grandfather was afflicted with the disease, so I could appreciate the biologic insights yet understand the physical suffering. It was a turning point for my career to incorporate investigation and research into a career caring for patients.

6. What’s your favorite spot in Ann Arbor?
Not one spot but the dirt roads that I cycle all year round.

7. What’s the best advice you’ve ever received?
To always consider the big picture. In life it’s easy to get focused on a narrow path and ignore your surroundings. This pertains to research, clinical care or even business. Being focused and diligent is great, but always put your thoughts and findings into a larger context. This is a unique trait that has benefitted me greatly.

8. What don’t your colleagues know about you?
The most thrilling thing I’ve done and what my colleagues don’t know about me is my love for motorsports – not as a spectator but as a participant! I learned how to ride a motorcycle at age four and had pegs placed so my feet would reach. I had to jump off before coming to a stop. My last motorcycle was a KTM 450. I loved riding through deserts and mountains of California. The most thrilling ride was through the canyons of southern California navigating along paths a foot wide on the edge of a hundred foot drop. I also love snowmobiling and have had the opportunity to take my daughter sledding in northern Michigan since moving here.