

Bryan Radosavcev, MHS '02

Diagnostic Detectives

Pathologists' assistants function as doctor's eyes and hands

To understand what happens in a pathology laboratory, don't rely on CIS and the plethora of cop shows, says Bryan Radosavcev MHS '02.

"What we do is challenging and fascinating," he says, "but it isn't glamorous."

Radosavcev, a pathologists' assistant, is the clinical coordinator for the pathology department at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Health System, where he supervises all clinical and research technical operations, personnel and procedures in the system's surgical pathology areas.

The PA profession has been in existence since the early 1970s and is in increasing demand. Whether they are investigating causes of death through autopsy pathology or examining tissue samples for diagnosis before, during or after surgical procedures, PAs are essential to modern health care teams.

PAs interact with pathologists in a similar manner to how physician assistants work with physicians. While PAs cannot deliver diagnoses—that task is the domain of pathologists, who are MDs—they function, Radosavcev says, as physicians' eyes and hands, performing the necessary tissue examinations and presenting the clinical information required for the diagnostic process. PAs are also increasingly involved in research because, as Radosavcev notes, "You can't have good patient care without accurate diagnosis." He and other PAs are investigating areas such as genetic testing, and working with specialties such as radiology to refine diagnostic techniques.

He was born and raised in a town outside Akron, Ohio, where his parents settled after emigrating from Yugoslavia. "I went to school not speaking English," Radosavcev says, "but I always loved science." By high



school, he was taking AP biology. After a class tour of a hospital laboratory, he says, "I walked out telling myself that I was going to work in a lab. I loved the idea of being able to look into the human body beyond what the eye could see."

A PA he met while obtaining his BS in cytotechnology from the University of Akron encouraged him to consider the PA field. Radosavcev applied to Quinnipiac's program, graduated with distinction, worked as a PA in a small hospital, and then opened and managed a private pathology lab before taking his current job. Along the way, while working full time, he obtained an MBA in business management from Pepperdine University.

Radosavcev will help educate the next generation of PAs. In June, several Quinnipiac students began clinical training at UCLA under his supervision, and the long-term goal is to establish a Quinnipiac PA program on the West Coast.

"The QU professors told us up front that the work would be difficult, both academically and emotionally, and it was," he says. "While they were tough, and expected a lot, they also all gave us enormous professional and personal support. I'm in touch almost weekly with (Professor) Ken Kaloustian, as a mentor and now a colleague. I have no doubt that this is the best PA program in the country."
—Rhea Hirshman