

## Ritchie Shoemaker, M. D.



**Ritchie Shoemaker, M. D.**, is a recognized leader in patient care, research and education pioneer in the field of biotoxin related illness. While illness acquired following exposure to the interior environment of water-damaged buildings (WDB) comprises the bulk of Shoemaker's daily practice, other illnesses caused by exposure to biologically produced toxins are quite similar in their "final common pathway." What this means is that while the illness might begin acutely with exposure to fungi, spirochetes, apicomplexans, dinoflagellates and cyanobacteria, for example, in its chronic form, each of these illnesses has similar symptoms, lab findings, and Visual Contrast Sensitivity findings. Taken together the inflammatory illness from each of these diverse sources is known as a Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome.

The few sentences above might make one think that the path of discovery of the complex abnormalities of innate immune physiology now confirmed to be present was simple. Frankly, none of the "players," as one might call C4a, TGF beta-1 and MMP9 or the genetic susceptibility from the immune response genes HLA DR, was known in 1997, the first year of Shoemaker's odyssey into the world of unusual diseases. Beginning with Pfiesteria, a dinoflagellate that killed fish and sickened over 300 people along the estuaries of the Chesapeake Bay from 1997-2001, Shoemaker has looked at multisystem, multisymptom illness with an environmental source as his "Holy Grail." Indeed, finding the answers to countless questions raised by biotoxin illnesses has provided help, and for some, cure, with illnesses defined by symptoms alone such as fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

Shoemaker says, "I suspect that the next textbook of autoimmunity and rheumatology will be one dedicated to treating high TGF beta-1 and restoring control of T-regulatory cells. Similarly, no one will be seen for neurological deficits and pulmonary problems without consideration of nerves and lungs as targets of innate immune responses gone haywire. As it is now we see unusual cases of multiple sclerosis, idiopathic juvenile arthritis, interstitial

lung disease and many others unveiled as treatable conditions where the therapeutic target is lack of regulation of innate immune inflammation.

Dr. Shoemaker has dedicated his life and career to uncovering the link between the toxic stew found in many of our buildings and homes, and the vast amount of misdiagnosed and catch-all ailments physicians often assign patients for whom they cannot offer any real treatment. By uncovering the real science behind these illnesses, and attacking the problem with clinical studies and sound research techniques, Dr. Shoemaker leads the way in not only identifying the true cause of these afflictions, but also in curing those whom the medical community deemed incurable. He truly feels it is imperative patients educate themselves, and has committed his time and resources to providing them with the tools they need for their survival.

Dr. Shoemaker graduated from Duke University where he received honors in undergraduate and medical degrees. He is a practicing physician in Pocomoke City, MD, and conducts research with collaborators on an international basis. His dedication to his patients and his advancement of medicine through research has been recognized often, including receipt of the Maryland Academy of Family Practice Physician of the Year 2000 award, which was followed by an award as a finalist in the National competition for 2002. Shoemaker is asked to lecture to academic and lay audiences alike, with addresses to the US House of Representatives and Senate.



Dr. Shoemaker has published eight books, the newest being *Surviving Mold*, and has numerous publications in scientific research journals, on audio and video tapes and in newspapers. He has made many presentations at scientific meetings, and has frequently appeared on television. Dr. Shoemaker was the lead committee member of the July 2010 Policy Holders of America position paper – “Research Committee Report on Diagnosis and Treatment of Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome Caused by Exposure to the Interior Environment of Water Damaged Buildings.” This treatise is widely noted to be the most thorough, rigorous and transparent of all the discussions of illness from WDB.

Dr. Shoemaker's lectures are known for their enthusiastic presentation of thought provoking ideas. Whether his speech is educational or motivational, he is an entertaining speaker with a stimulating approach to thinking that will challenge the listener.

Shoemaker is at home when he is in the wooded wetlands of his beloved Eastern Shore of Maryland. Whether he is building Nature Trails, creating non-tidal wetlands or a demonstration tidal wetland garden for the Town of Pocomoke City, Maryland, he is fond of a hammer and a shovel.

Shoemaker is married to JoAnn Jasinski, his bride of nearly thirty years, a long-time pre school educator. Their daughter, Sally, is following her own path in life as a teacher in environmental sciences.

