

- Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple a day Lake Region Healthcare's health and wellness program where we feature news and information you can use to live a healthier life. I am Katie Johnson, your host and my guest today is Dr. Milton Ropes. He is the newest member of our medical staff, a urologist in our urology department who has joined us after serving as a temporary physician here and now joining our team full time. Good morning, Dr. Ropes.
- Dr. Ropes: Good morning.
- Katie Johnson: Thank you for joining me today. Let's introduce you to our listeners and tell them a little bit about your background. What has your medical career looked like up until joining Lake Region Healthcare?
- Dr. Ropes: Well, I was born in Iowa and subsequently went to medical school in Iowa as well. I went through on a Navy scholarship program and there subsequently I went into the United States Navy and I spent the next 13 years in the Navy as a medical officer and that's where I took my training as a urologist as well. After exiting from the Navy, I took up a private practice in Winona, Minnesota. I practiced there for about 13 years before transitioning to Duluth where I worked with Essentia Health for about 20 years. And after leaving Essentia I embarked on a temporary career, which brought me to a Lake Region.
- Katie Johnson: And when you talk about all these years of experience, you obviously found a specialty that you like in urology. How did you land on medical school in general and urology specifically?
- Dr. Ropes: Well, I always wanted to be a physician, so that was the basis for that. But when I first entered the Navy, we were considered just general medical officers. And during that time I did a former relationship with a urologist at the base that I was stationed at, who allowed me to assist him in his surgeries and follow him around in his office. I grew to realize that this is exactly what I was looking for, a nice balance between office-based urology and surgery. And I applied for their program. And subsequent to about 1985 I was a urologist.
- Katie Johnson: And you mentioned that you were a working in a temporary basis and have been in that role at Lake Region Healthcare for a few months now. And like to believe, maybe just thought it was so good here. You decided you wanted to stay.
- Dr. Ropes: Well, yeah, that's exactly right. You know, when I started here in January, it was a really just a job, a temporary job, and I had a contract and so forth and I did my work here. But as the time went on, I started to form a relationships and a notice how collegiate the staff was and my colleagues as well. And when I was ultimately offered a permanent position here, I... Obviously I said that'd be great.

Katie Johnson: And we're so glad that you did. Let's talk about urology specifically. Some of the, the general diagnoses and treatments that you offer in the urology clinic here at Lake Region Healthcare.

Dr. Ropes: Well, actually we offer just about the entire gamut of a neurologic services. We take care of incontinence, bladder outlet obstruction, prostate diseases, both benign and malignant. Bladder problems, both benign and malignant. Kidney stones are a big role we have. We deal with incontinence as well. The only thing that we really do not cover very completely are some of the very large complex surgeries and it's not that me and my associate have not done these. It's just that they're probably best done at a larger institution.

Katie Johnson: Probably where they're done more often. Again, with much more experience there. We talk about these urological conditions and it's probably one if not the specialty that is the most delicate or the most difficult that we find to talk about often as individuals. And requires a lot of trust with your physician. Tell me what you do to help build that trust and to help build the confidence in people who might need these, these types of interventions and help to feel comfortable seeking that help and have confidence in your care.

Dr. Ropes: Well, I think time is a big factor. I try and provide enough time that I can not only discuss the problems that the patients have, but also get a feeling for who they are. Where do they work, what did they use to do if they're retired, what are their interests, things like this. And just try and impart to them that this is what I do for a living. They are not the only people in town that have whatever specific problem and a lot of the problems we do deal with, as you pointed out, are somewhat personal issues. And I realize that it's taken a long time for some of these people to actually get up enough nerve to go in and talk to somebody about it. But I try and make them as comfortable as possible in terms of saying that, "I've heard this all before, this is what I do for a living. No reason to be embarrassed about it and all we're here to do is try and help them with their problem."

Katie Johnson: Right. And improve that quality of life. Speaking of that, what is it that you like most about being a doctor and/or about being a urologist?

Dr. Ropes: Well, it's kind of personal satisfaction if you want to look at that that way. I mean it... Every person that comes in is kind of a new challenge. They all have their particular problems and of course it's up to me to try and figure out what these problems are. But when you actually do figure this out and you treat them and they come back and they say "yes, it's all better," or "boy it's significantly improved" or whatever, you get this kind of a personal satisfaction that you know, I've actually helped somebody and that's primarily what drives me.

Katie Johnson: That's a good feeling, I'm sure. What about when you're not working? What do you enjoy doing?

Dr. Ropes: Actually, when I'm not doing what my wife wants me to do on the weekends, I'm a beekeeper.

Katie Johnson: Oh, interesting.

Dr. Ropes: I raise the bees and other interests. I do stained glass. And lastly I hunt. I am the world's greatest hunter, but I'm not particularly the world's greatest success at it, but...

Katie Johnson: Greatest hunter, but not the greatest shot. Is that what you're saying?

Dr. Ropes: Well I'm a good shot too it's just that I'm a great deer hunter but not a great deer killer.

Katie Johnson: Oh, I got it.

Dr. Ropes: There you go.

Katie Johnson: Got it. Well fascinating hobbies. So diverse and really nice to get to know you a little bit better on this morning show. Anything else you'd like our listeners to know about you before we wrap up today?

Dr. Ropes: Well, nothing personally about me, but we are here and you know there was a hiatus for awhile without urology care and I'm hoping that people will... The word will get out that we can now offer almost all services here locally.

Katie Johnson: Right, right. And we are so glad to share that message this morning to introduce you, Dr. Milton Ropes, urologist. New to our medical staff here and as you mentioned, really emphasize that urology services are here, right here, close to home in Fergus Falls at our urology clinic. So give us a call. Dr. Ropes, thanks for sharing your time with us and your story with us this morning and welcome full-time now to the team at Lake Region healthcare.

Dr. Ropes: Well thank you Katie for having me.

Katie Johnson: Dr. Milton Ropes and Katie Johnson on Apple a Day today reminding you there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day.