



Dr. Tracey Levens: Profile of a Multi-Talented, Multi-Faceted M.D.

By Dean M. Shapiro, Senior Editor

PHOTO COURTESY OF TRACEY LEVENS

Who could have thought that someone who endured such a challenging childhood as did Tracey Levens, would become the success story that she is today?

A fully licensed medical practitioner with an M.D. after her name, Tracey is also an actor, musician, composer, lead singer, motorcycle and offshore boat racer, scuba diving instructor, rock-climber and a mermaid. She was also a candidate for NASA as a mission specialist and is currently acting as the on-set medical director for a full-length film and much more. She has lived an adventurous, event-filled life that others may find hard to believe. And, above all, she is the proud mother of a young singer who has begun his rise on the stages of the Los Angeles opera world.

Anyone who meets Tracey for the first time is immediately astounded by her exuberant personality and her boundless energy level. She has fulfilled her multiple dreams and objectives and she isn't finished yet. She is continually looking for new worlds to conquer and, given who she is and what she has accomplished so far, nothing seems to be out of reach for her.

The second-oldest of six children born to what would become a working



Tracey with her son Egan Connor Carroll IV

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Tracey belting out a solo at Margarita Bergen's February 2023 Round Table Luncheon

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DEAN M. SHAPIRO

single-mother household, she learned responsibilities as a pre-teenager when she had to help raise the four other children who were younger than her.

"It was a little rough but it made me who I am today to be able to get through medical school," Tracey recalled in a recent series of interviews. "I put myself through med school without a dime of help from anybody. It was tough but it made me very resilient and made me realize at a very young age that I could do whatever I set my mind to."

Growing up in a rural area near Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, Tracey had to cover the household responsibilities for her mother who commuted daily to and from a job in New Orleans and occasionally worked late and stayed overnight frequently. This was all between the ages of 12 and 15, and Tracey was still in school, having to cook, clean, help her siblings with homework and get them ready for school in the mornings. Huge responsibilities for someone that young.

With all of this going on, Tracey still managed to find time to be a cheerleader and play flute in the school band through her sophomore year at Bay High School. During the summer between her sophomore and junior years the family moved to New Orleans East and Tracey finished her pre-college schooling at Abramson High School. When she was 15 she moved into her own apartment and worked two jobs to pay the rent. Because her physical appearance made her look older than her years, no one questioned her age, even while she was waitressing and serving alcoholic beverages.

From Abramson, it was on to the University of New Orleans where Tracey majored in biology with minors in chemistry and the performing arts. "This gave me a good background for a lot of what I do today, she said. "Those are my loves: medicine and the performing arts."

During those years, from the early to late 1980s, while earning her Bachelor's, Tracey pursued her passion for medicine while running a small construction company



Tracey in SWAT gear

PHOTO COURTESY OF TRACEY LEVENS



Tracey testing out a hazmat suit

PHOTO COURTESY OF TRACEY LEVENS

that did home renovations. While at UNO, she was a research assistant working under the mentorship of Dr. Roy Baerwald, an entomologist and professor who oversaw the electron microscope laboratory at the University of New Orleans. Two technical, scientific papers that she authored, examining the structure and effects of penicillin, were published and archived in libraries throughout the U.S. She received her B.S. in Biology in 1988.

After a one-year hiatus from medical school due to a health issue, Tracey

continued at the LSU Medical school of New Orleans where she received her medical Doctorate degree in 1993. While in her Family Medicine residency at Ochsner Medical, she won the honor of chief resident. Also during that time, in 1992, she gave birth to her son, Egan C Carroll IV who, today, is a rising singer in the national opera world.

In 1993, on the day she graduated from her Ochsner Medical residency, Tracey was promoted from chief resident to Ochsner family medicine core faculty: a staff position where she supervised and taught the medical residents working under her. She held this position at Ochsner Medical Center Kenner for the next three years.

In 2000, after marrying one of her Abramson classmates, Charles Fernandez, a classical composer, conductor and three-time Emmy Award nominee, Tracey moved to California to be with him and she appears on the cover of Charles's first CD. There she had a burgeoning private practice in Bakersfield, CA, taking on thousands of insured patients while she sat on multiple boards and was chairman of the Quality Management Board for the largest insurance company in California's Kern County. She was also the chief medical director for the six prisons in neighboring Tulare County, responsible for 2,000 inmates.

During her tenure of supervising the prisons, convicted murderer, Charles Manson, was processed through one of them for a parole hearing. "When he was walked through the prison, we had to keep the other prisoners back from him. He was a hero to some of these guys," Tracey recalled.

After roughly 20 years in California, Tracey returned to New Orleans and went into semi-retirement, working "locums," temporarily filling in for other doctors, through a personnel firm. The free time enabled her to pursue some of her other interests and leisure vocations, including scuba diving, being hired out as a "mermaid" for a local dive shop, singing

lead for various local bands. She serves on the board for the charity "Angel's Place" which provides support to "needy families of children with catastrophic medical issues that fall through the cracks of our medical system." She also enjoys such adventurous pursuits as rock climbing, especially alongside waterfalls which she has done on multiple continents, and the more passive pursuits like attending classical music and opera performances and other social events with friends..

She has also been hired as an actor in several recent short films, most recently in the title role of a Chapters Entertainment piece called "The Candy Lady." In it, her grotesquely made-up character lures children into her home by laying down wrapped candy on the sidewalk and up the walkway to her house where the piece was filmed. "The lesson from this is, for kids not to trust strangers," she said.

More films are on the horizon for Tracey as she continues to build on her profile and credentials on the Internet Media Data Base (IMdB), a prestigious reference source for Hollywood talent.

On Sundays she can be found singing on the praise team or working the camera and soundboard for the Church of the King in Kenner as an audio engineer.

Tracey is especially proud of her son, Egan C Carroll, IV and the career he is pursuing as an opera singer. "He was born to do opera," she said, recalling a time when he was singing a perfect Italian aria in front of the TV set in their New Orleans home when he was only four years old.

She also fondly recalls an audition he did for renowned choral director, Eric Whitacre, when Egan was still in his teens. "After hearing him, none of the other singers would even audition at that point," Tracey said. "They were like, 'We just can't beat that.' So Egan got the part and he was able to perform at Carnegie Hall before the age of 21 with Eric Whitacre."

And so life goes on happily for this jovial, extremely likable, multi-faceted and multi-talented woman who goes by



Tracey as a cheerleader at Bay High School
PHOTO COURTESY OF TRACEY LEVENS



Tracey with Joel Bein of the New Orleans Chamber Orchestra (center) and a guest piano soloist
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the stage name of Doc T. What lies ahead for her? "Whatever I feel like doing next," is the answer. And she will and, whatever it is, she will work it to the max!