



Thomason C. Smith, MT(ASCP), is the Director of Operations at OSU East Clinical Labs/Covid Testing Program OSU Clinical lab Outreach and Engagement in Columbus, Ohio. Mr. Smith was born and raised in Westerville, Ohio. He attended the Ohio State University School of Allied Health Professions

graduating in 1977 with a BS in Medical Technology. Rising through the ranks at OSU Wexner Medical Center, Mr. Smith managed or directed many interesting projects crucial to the inception and development of outpatient laboratory services at OSUWMC. His collective experiences culminated with him becoming Director of Operations for the Ohio State COVID-19 Laboratory which does COVID-19 surveillance testing for 36 of Ohio's 88 counties. His lab was one of the first to adopt the CDC RT-PCR assay for COVID-19.

Mr. Smith's colleagues say that he inspires his lab team and continually creates "solutions with impact" for testing during the COVID crisis to serve vulnerable populations across the entire state of Ohio. "He is thoughtful, tireless, creative, inspirational, thoughtful, and leads with actions," they said.

According to Mr. Smith, fear and anxiety are some of the greatest challenges that lab professionals face during the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic. He said that "fear, exhaustion, and grief for the human condition are the greatest challenges to face laboratory medicine professionals in the COVID-19 pandemic. These nontechnical barriers hamper our best workplace efforts as human beings. I have approached this problem set of the large team of technologists I oversee by making my cell phone number available at all hours, by contacting local vendors to support and reward the important work of the COVID-19 response team with food, t-shirts and other small mementos that validate the heroism of each of these technologists in the workplace during this time, and by lending a listening ear."

What did receiving the BOC Lab Hero Award mean to you?

"I was very surprised to receive the Award – it really reframed my thoughts about my career. I am used to working until the

job is done and the goal is achieved; COVID-19 just posed bigger jobs and loftier goals. I certainly had never before thought of myself as a Lab Hero!"

How did your friends, family colleagues, etc., react to the news that you had received a 2020 BOC Lab Hero Award?

"They were not surprised! My wife said, "of course you are a Lab Hero", and many of my colleagues pointed out things that I had done to help them personally or to help the clinical enterprise throughout my career. These things, however, are just part of my work ethic and the way I perform in my role."

Everyone gets BOC certification for a different reason, but what is your story?

"The ASCP BOC certification was the stamp of official approval after taking a full-time student pathway through college to get my MT credential and allied health degree while also working full-time. This [achievement] has become a symbol of my general motto of pursuing each endeavor to its logical conclusion."

Why did you choose the ASCP Foundation Laboratory Student Scholarship as your BOC Lab Hero charity?

"I chose the Laboratory Student Scholarship because I have enjoyed my career and found it very rewarding; I would like to help someone else to have this same experience."

What message would you like to send to all of the medical laboratory professionals around the world this Lab Week?

"I would like to have them all really reflect upon how important their work has been during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Laboratorians are among the unsung heroes of healthcare as we touch many lives in our roles in the varied laboratories we staff."

The developments in laboratory science and dramatic changes in testing platforms and their positive impacts on healthcare just during my career have been amazing to see and to reflect upon. Your skills and work are critical to the wellbeing of all the patient populations we serve."