



Angela Tomei Robinson MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM} was guided by key mentors in high school who noticed her interest in pathology because of medical conditions that afflicted her family. She was advised to pursue a college degree

Laboratory Science, which would provide her a degree with a career or a degree that could serve as a stepping-stone to other careers. She also wanted to be actively involved in her career and learned that Laboratory Medicine would allow her to be a part of everything.

Angela graduated from St. John's University with a bachelor's degree in Clinical Laboratory Science, receiving the college's prestigious President's Award as well as the New York State Student of the Year Award. Hired as a bench technologist in her favorite laboratory area, Hematology, she was promoted from lead technologist to weekend supervisor and then to manager and consultant for physician office laboratories (POLs). After receiving a master's degree, she was promoted to Associate Administrative Director of Winthrop University Hospital. She also serves as a clinical advisor and adjunct professor for several clinical laboratory science universities and colleges.

At present, she continues to be a member of professional societies with extensive networking. She has also been featured on podcasts and is published in various journals promoting clinical laboratory advocacy.

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

"I was both extremely humbled and sincerely appreciative to have been nominated by peers and colleagues, as I prefer to give more than to receive. [I am] very honored to be a BOC Lab Hero recipient representing our profession and medical laboratory professionals with this national honor from the ASCP BOC."

How did your friends, family, colleagues, etc., react to the news that you had received a 2021 BOC Lab Hero Award?

"My colleagues quickly shared the news on Facebook and LinkedIn and there were emails and text messages and calls with congratulations. News of the award was shared outside the laboratory bringing awareness of the importance of the laboratory not just with friends and neighbors but also to the public. Family members were proud that dedication and commitment of my time and efforts was so distinctly recognized."

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

"I was educated at a NAACLS-accredited educational program, with compelling laboratory professionals as educators and mentors, where an [ASCP] BOC credential is considered to be the national standard of competence for laboratory professionals. Hospitals and reference laboratories seeking quality laboratory personnel [prefer to] hire [ASCP] BOC credential holders. To this day, I advise students and staff to attain this distinction and then use that well-deserved credential after their name.

ASCP BOC certification has always been considered the gold standard in credentials for laboratory professionals. Additionally, many U.S. states and territories utilize ASCP BOC certification exams for their state's medical laboratory licensure exams in order to maintain standards for [the] body of knowledge, scope of practice, and entry level skills to ensure the 'health, safety, and welfare of the general public' (U.S. Dept of Health & Human Services HRSA)."



Why did you choose Heroes for Healthcare as your BOC Lab Hero charity?

“Heroes for Healthcare promotes its organization as ‘aligning people, passion and purpose.’ It is a nonprofit organization that helps military personnel find their career in Healthcare. They are involved in educational service process[es] and job placement [alongside] consultation services which offer grants and scholarships. In addition to laboratory advocacy, this was an opportunity to support a lesser-known charity, and it helps bring attention to our military laboratory professionals who often work behind the scenes and don’t always get the credit that they deserve.”

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

“Today is the most challenging time for healthcare, particularly for laboratory medicine.

Over the years, many issues have not been resolved. The ‘S’ factors - Shortages of Staffing, Supplies, Salaries, and Supportive workplaces – were exacerbated with the pandemic.

However, with challenges come opportunities. We need to attract, recruit, and mentor future laboratory colleagues as well as retain qualified medical laboratory professionals with compensation commensurate with education, experience, knowledge and skills.

Laboratory advocacy seeks media attention, public awareness, industry respect, and government lobbying support. Media attention is improving, the Protecting Access to Medicare Act (PAMA) laboratory cuts were recently paused, and salaries are increasing.

Still, there is so much to be done, so seize every chance (i.e. Lab Week) to spotlight and highlight the value the laboratory and laboratory professionals bring to patient care.

Laboratory Advocacy is each and every one of us – you are needed now more than ever. Be an advocate every day in every aspect of work as well as outside the laboratory walls. Join a professional society and become part of the voice speaking on your behalf. While complaints and venting release frustration, only constructive criticism and feedback will find solutions. Be part of the solution. [It is] better to try than succeed at doing nothing. One individual can make a difference [while] a group of individuals together can make all the difference in the world.”