

Olen & Danae Netteburg
Candidates for Honorary Degrees
Doctor of Humane Letters



Olen Netteburg, following advice from his father who suggested he take whatever classes he found interesting to decide a major, graduated from Andrews University in 2001 with degrees in biophysics and mathematics education and German studies, with religion and chemistry minors. During his time at Andrews, Olen padded his resume with various jobs from grading papers to working the grounds to lifeguarding to teaching swimming to writing for the Student Movement to reading textbooks on tape for dyslexic students and being a resident assistant in the residence hall.

After graduation, Olen deferred his acceptances to graduate school in agricultural economics and law, and instead opted to spend six months teaching English and religion in South Korea, then six months traveling around Africa. It took only five weeks at Heri Hospital in Tanzania to convince Olen he wanted to be a missionary physician.

Upon his return from Africa, Olen took the Medical College Admissions Test and spent the next year teaching high school physics and German while applying to Loma Linda University School of Medicine. He was subsequently admitted and proceeded to graduate in 2007.

Olen describes his most demanding and surprising accomplishment during his time at Loma Linda as “finagling” Danae Bland into marrying him before graduation. Fortunate to match into his desired specialty, emergency medicine, and to match into the same hospital where Danae was already in her residency, Olen started his specialty training at Baystate Medical Center in 2007 and completed it in 2010, while also moonlighting in a community emergency department and in psychiatry. He became a board-certified emergency physician in 2011.

In 2010, Olen and Danae moved to Chad, where Olen serves as the director of Bere Adventist Hospital and also as one of the treating physicians, functioning as pediatrician, internist, ultrasonographer, anesthesiologist and, on rare occasions, surgeon.

Danae Netteburg completed a bachelor’s degree in biology with a chemistry minor at Southern Adventist University in 2002. During her time at Southern, she took a one-year hiatus to serve as a student missionary in Zambia, which solidified her desire to be a missionary physician like her parents. From 2002–2006, she attended Loma Linda University where she earned her medical degree, and for the next four years she studied at Baystate Medical Center, obtaining her OB-GYN residency. Since 2010, Danae has been certified with the American Board of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

During her time at Loma Linda, Danae kept active in missions, traveling as a medical student to Adventist hospitals in Ethiopia and Malawi. In 2006, a committee named Danae Miss Loma Linda, as the student most representative of the spirit of the university. In 2008, she received the Excellence in Teaching award from the graduating class of Tufts University School of Medicine.

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Since completing residency in 2010, Danae has found herself on-call 24/7 for more than six years. She has personally been responsible for the delivery of thousands of babies, as well as hundreds of Cesarean-sections and hysterectomies, dozens of fistula repairs and many other medical and surgical interventions for women in Chad. Feeling God's calling to a country named "The Worst Country in the World to be a Woman," with the highest maternal mortality rate and neonatal mortality rate, Danae has done her part to treat women and train the next generation of maternal-child healthcare providers, empowering women whenever and wherever she works.

Since the Netteburg's arrival at Bere Adventist Hospital in Chad, patient visits and surgical volume have doubled to tripled on all services, square footage of the hospital has expanded threefold, income has tripled to quadrupled and patients have visited from all six bordering countries. In addition, foreigners living in Chad have come to the hospital to be treated, including people from every continent except Antarctica. A nursing school was also started at the hospital this year. In 2016, Bere Adventist Hospital was named the Best Hospital in Chad by the International Healthcare Commission.

When not in Chad, Danae enjoys spending her time outdoors, planning her next projects for women and evangelism for her return to Chad, filling her husband's hard drive with her photography hobby, and traveling with her family, having recently been to her 50th state, Hawaii. Olen enjoys skydiving and has earned his skydiving license. He and Danae are the proud parents of four children.

For their contribution to Seventh-day Adventist medical missions, for bringing positive change to those need through sacrificial service, and for living out the gospel in their personal and professional lives, Andrews University takes great pleasure in honoring Olen Netteburg and Danae Netteburg each with the degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*.

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