

Suzy Griffin



Where did you grow up? I was born and raised in Dallas, TX.

Tell us about your best childhood memory. In our family, it was all about fishing. Fresh water fishing from our boat in area lakes, coastal salt water fishing from the shore/piers/jetties and even some deep-sea fishing in the Gulf. My father loved to fish and patiently educated his family and friends in all of the necessary skills. We always had great adventures during those trips. Recently my husband and I began fly fishing and I am sure dad would have loved this, too!

What do you do for fun? I enjoy traveling with my family, especially to destinations where we explore reefs or hike in National Parks. When not traveling, I spend my time with books, friends and family, pets and yard work.

When did you join UNTHSC? Dr. Robert Luedtke hired me in 1993 to work in his laboratory in the department of Pharmacology & Neuroscience.

What do you do for the Research Division? I am part of the research development team and assist with limited submission funding opportunities, grant writing workshops and the Basic Research and SBIR Phase 0 seed grant programs.

What is your favorite thing about working at UNTHSC? I have been fortunate to know so many great people at this campus over the years, but I especially enjoy learning about all of the interesting research being conducted at UNTHSC.

Svetlana Pitts



Where did you grow up? I grew up in Saint-Petersburg. Not the sunny one in Florida, but a snowy one in Russia. It is the second-biggest city in my home country, and a huge tourist destination. I miss being asked on a daily basis how to get to various landmarks.

Tell us about your best childhood memory. When I was a kid, my parents took me to the Black Sea for a summer vacation every year. It was really nice to soak in the warm water and then dry up in the sun. While hot sunny weather is an everyday occurrence in Texas, for people from the North (Saint-Petersburg is on a similar latitude to Alaska) it is a rare treat.

Another exciting memory is school exchange programs with Germany. I studied German as my first foreign language, and while now I have forgotten most of it, I used to be fluent. When I was in high school, I got to spend a few weeks living in families of German high school students, and then host them in my home. It was so interesting to be immersed in a different culture and learn about foreign country from locals. For the first time, I got to speak German not as a class exercise, but in everyday settings with native speakers and fully rely on my ability to do so (my English was really bad back then). I remember lying in bed on my first day and thinking that another Russian speaking person is several kilometers away and being proud of myself.

What do you do for fun? I really like hiking and going for a walk in the park. I can't wait for weather to get cooler, so I can go to the Japanese Garden to feed carps or take a trip to the Arboretum in Dallas. Meanwhile I stay inside and enjoy Netflix and playing board games with friends.

When did you join UNTHSC? I am a pretty fresh addition to the UNTHSC team. I started here only half a year ago.

What do you do for the Research Division? The goal of the Research Development office is to help UNTHSC faculty members to obtain funding and advance their

research. I run Seed Grant Programs to offer initial funding for new exciting research projects and provide training on how to identify extramural funding opportunities. Currently I am also assembling a new database to showcase the expertise of our faculty members.

What is your favorite this about working at UNTHSC?

I really enjoy learning about all the exciting research taking place at UNTHSC and figuring out what can I do to assist our researchers to move it forward. I also really like our Research Development & Commercialization team! They are great people to work with.