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The Chief Tech

They go by many names: Chief Tech, Administrative Assistant, Administrator, Lab Manager, Technical Director.

Regardless of the title, he or she has usually been in the department for many years—before the residents, before many attending physicians, even before some directors. The Chief Tech has seen it all...or most of it.

The Chief Tech is a kind of historian of the service: familiar with each staff member, with each room and piece of major equipment. They remember how and when each piece was chosen and when each arrived. They know the birth dates, the personalities, the foibles. They remember each personal crisis and the embarrassing episode; they remember the near disaster, the strike, the power outage, as well as the broken water pipe.

At times, the Chief Tech seems to be viewing these past episodes while simultaneously viewing the present, silently comparing and judging past events, people and performances.

Unlike most historians, however, they usually keep these insights to themselves, to cherish in the privacy of memory, like rare jewels or precious rations. Their eyes, however, reflect the wisdom accumulated from the layers of experience. The beneficiaries of this experience who are nourished and nurtured by it are their departments, coworkers and the patients.

A Chief Tech's job description does not specify an extra measure of compassion, a liter of support, a kilo of encouragement, a treasure of personal loyalty, but these associates perform beyond the specified description; they serve, function and fill a need; they give another unintended meaning to the term "support staff."

Stanley J. Goldsmith, MD, Editor-in-Chief,
The Journal of Nuclear Medicine