



**Aaron J. Place, PhD, OMS-III**, at Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine at the Cherokee Nation in Tahlequah, OK. Before starting medical school, Dr. Place earned a bachelor's degree in wildlife management and biology, a master's degree in conservation biology, and a Ph.D. in zoology. He taught courses in vertebrate ecology, evolution, and behavior at

Northwestern Oklahoma State University in Alva for 14 years. His research has focused on the evolutionary and behavioral ecology of rattlesnakes, and more recently on the application of evolutionary principles to the clinical practice of medicine. After being bitten in the laboratory by a Western diamondback rattlesnake, Aaron discovered the urgent need for rural physicians. Innumerable drives from Alva to Oklahoma City and his primary care provider convinced him to change careers and enter medicine. He has been married for 25 years and has two adult children, four snakes, and a dog.