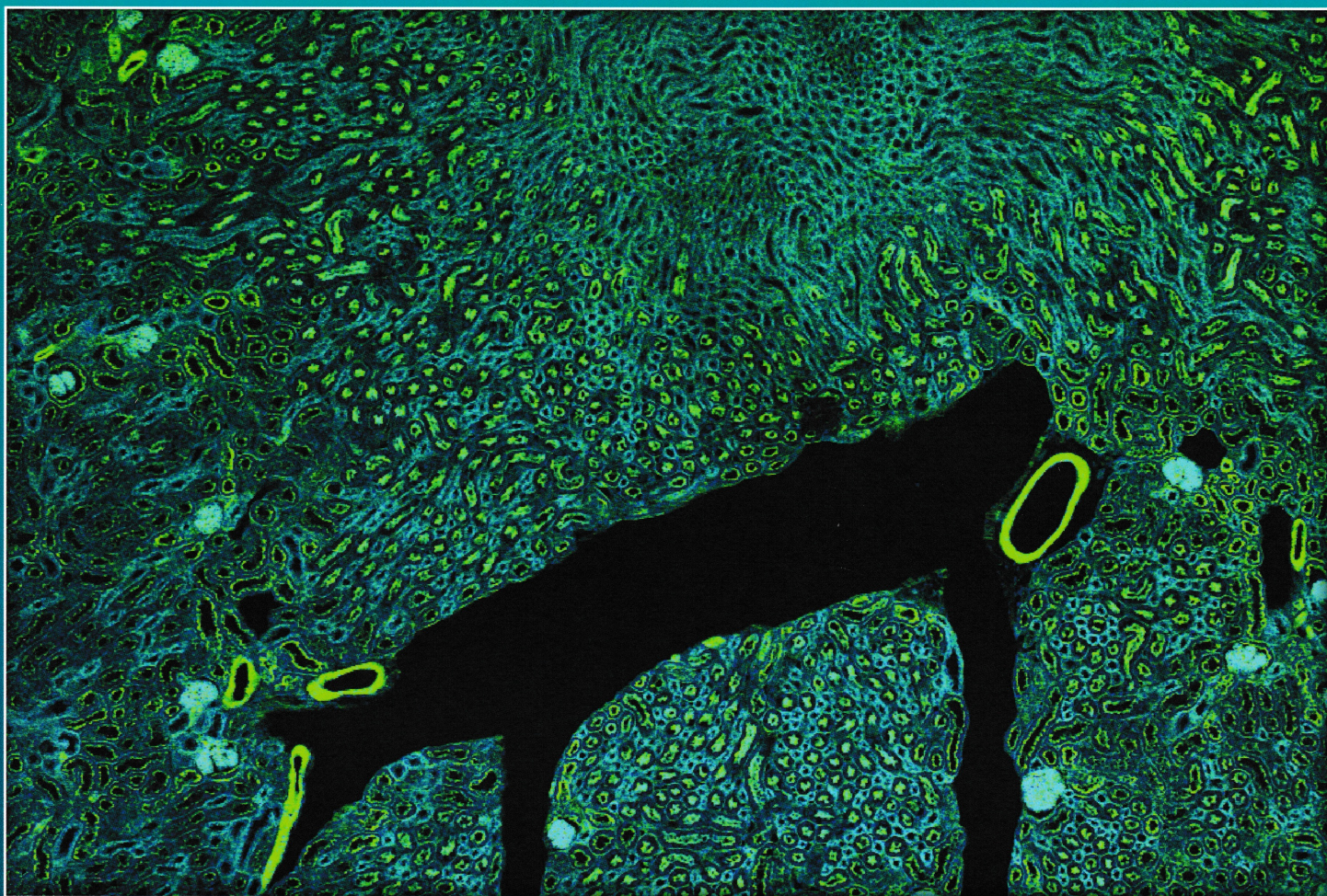




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AN EDUCATION PROGRAM TO ASSIST MID-CAREER PROFESSIONALS TO TRANSFER TO A MICROSCOPY CAREER.

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Mid to late career professionals (particularly prospective retirees) experience steep challenges when faced with the desire to switch careers entirely and seek a challenging working adventure far removed from their own experience [1, 2, 3, 4]. This can be especially challenging when transferring from a non-academic, non bench-top-science career (aviation for example), into a hard-science opportunity like microscopy. A wide variety of career choices exist within the field of microscopy (a fact not readily apparent to an aviator), however without adequate motivation, proper training and mentorship/education, employment opportunities such as 'light microscopist' are simply unavailable to professionals who might consider it a possibility. There is certainly no substitute for training and education in any science. Often decades of study are undertaken to excel at science. Thankfully regional programs of study are available within travel distance for those who can afford it. But might the prospect of all that daunting training deflate the prospective second career professional? Motivation might seem a trivial matter to consider when navigating the winding trail of starting again at 60. But in the first author's case, motivation was everything and it came from a microscopist who had amazing paleontological specimens and was searching for students. In this presentation we briefly review the implementation of planning, education and execution modalities that have allowed the first author to transition from an advanced status aviation career (40+ years) into a microscopy-based science career (including rewarding microscopy/publication and presentation opportunities). Modalities include acquiring professional-grade instruments, conducting guided research on fresh paleontological specimens, mastering dissecting and compound microscopy, photomicrography (Figures 1,2), specimen processing and polarised light under guided mentoring. All these can lead one to microscopy that clearly advances science as shown. With involvement in local area microscopy societies, attendance and participation at other microscopy meetings (like M&M), along with volunteering in labs, the first author has been led to begin mentoring young students to do likewise. Now giving back to our youth is an unexpected reward.

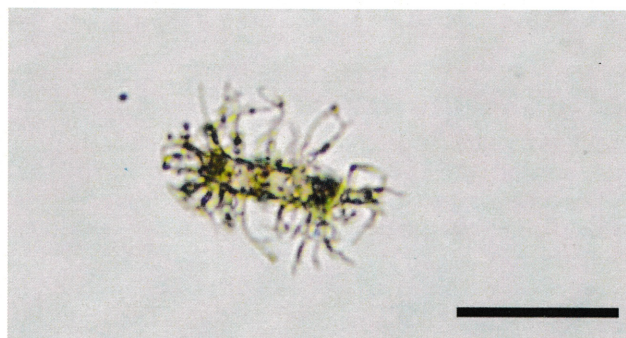


Figure 1 Brightfield (BF) Osteocyte, demineralized surface shard Scale bar = 18µm

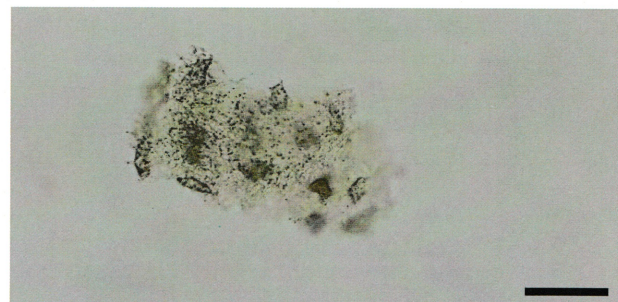


Figure 2 Brightfield (BF) Osteocyte matrix, demineralized surface shard. Scale bar = 25µm

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