

At first glance, my life is easily dissected, my experiences neatly separated into geographic locations: Michigan, Mississippi, Texas, Colorado, Washington, Japan, Colorado again, and now Wisconsin. My father, an Air Force pilot and English professor, is responsible for these frequent shifts in locale. In the midst of the uncertainty surrounding new cultures, new schools, and new friends, I have been very fortunate to have the constancy of a loving family which offers great support, encourages personal growth, and nurtures both an intellectual curiosity and a humanistic spirit. At a young age, my parents instilled within me a love of learning. During my grade school years, my father taught English at the Air Force Academy and my mother obtained her bachelor's degree in psychology. I remember reading and discussing short stories with my parents over the dinner table, and attending lectures and labs with my mother after school. My love for the natural sciences flourished during high school, living on Okinawa, Japan. An enthusiastic teacher introduced me to a world of cells, tissues, and the diverse sea life surrounding the subtropical island, as well as the ethical complexities inherent to the study of life. I discovered beauty in both the form and function of living systems, and I learned that the sciences are not merely a string of factual information, but a dynamic ocean of ideas and theories.

A focused and hardworking person, I worked part-time throughout college and finished my college coursework in slightly over three years. I thoroughly enjoyed the liberal arts education I obtained at Colorado College, studying such diverse subjects as African American Folklore, the Art of China, and Scanning Electron Microscopy. Quiet and contemplative by nature, the intimacy of small classes provided an environment in which I learned to think on my feet, express my opinions, and defend my ideas. I also spent a summer working with a genetics professor as a research assistant, honing my skills at the bench and developing an appreciation for the dedication, skepticism, and patience required for these endeavors. In addition, I volunteered at a local hospital throughout college, which offered an initial exposure to medicine. Upon graduating from college with a degree in biology, I had the fortunate opportunity to observe the realities of life in a medical profession, spending 2 years working as an assistant to two doctors of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. I learned much as I spent time talking with patients with common injuries such as low back pain and carpal tunnel syndrome, and discussing these cases with the physicians. This first-hand clinical experience allowed me to make a truly informed choice in applying to medical school.

Like most of my colleagues, I entered medical school uncertain of specialty choice. With my previous exposure to work-related injuries, I initially entertained the idea of Preventive Medicine. However, from the first day of my junior Internal Medicine rotation, I found my niche. I discovered tremendous gratification in being with patients at the bedside, the challenge of managing multiple medical problems and keeping up with each individual's health maintenance, and the privilege of participating in long-term care. Subsequent rotations in outpatient Internal Medicine and my subinternship strengthened by passion for Internal Medicine. During these rotations, I discovered a love for teaching. Whether clarifying a test result for a patient, pointing out interesting physical exam findings, or discussing the art of case presentations with junior medical students, I find great satisfaction in sharing knowledge with others. While I am considering a career in academic medicine, I am confident that my interest in teaching will benefit my patients regardless of the setting in which I ultimately practice.

Hippocrates wrote, "Wherever the art of medicine is loved, there also is love of humanity." Internal Medicine appeals to me in its ability to translate the art and science of comprehensive analysis and discussion into individualized patient care, to apply evidence-based medicine to a unique patient in the clinic or at the bedside. Internal Medicine offers an opportunity to learn, to contemplate, to problem-solve, and also to teach, to touch, to empathize. I look forward to a lifetime filled with such opportunities.