

When I arrived at the University of Pennsylvania for my undergraduate studies I initially planned to pursue a premedical curriculum. However, I chose to major in Communications, because I was attracted to the career prospects in that field at the time. After college I spent a year in San Francisco and two years in New York City working in marketing. Those experiences gave me a taste of the real world and an understanding that working hard is necessary to succeed. I learned firsthand that teamwork is more important than individual accomplishments. Interacting with people at various levels of a company, from those in the mailroom to the CEO, helped me sharpen my communication skills and demonstrated to me the necessity of developing good interpersonal skills in order to obtain the trust of others.

While working in marketing was interesting, I felt personally unfulfilled. I needed a career that was more intellectually challenging, and where I could have a positive impact on others. I knew in my heart that the marketing industry was not a proper fit for me. I am now pleased to say that I feel perfectly at home in the medical setting. Although my path to medical school was non-traditional, I am fortunate for the many experiences that I have had and even more fortunate that I ended up finding a career that is meaningful to me and is one that I enjoy. My father, a community psychiatrist, and my mother, a guidance counselor at an inner city high school, raised me with strong values. I have long understood the importance of being in a position to help others through their example.

Choosing a specialty is a decision I do not take lightly. During my Internal Medicine clerkship, which happened to be the last clerkship of my third year, it became clear that Internal Medicine is the field for me. I was drawn to Internal Medicine because it offers intellectual challenges. While many students were put off by the hours of rounding, that was the best part of the experience for me. It is a time when one is able to learn about the individual patients. It allows time for teaching by residents and attendings, forcing one to analyze and discuss various patient situations and the management of these problems. Having come from a family where we used to fight over who got to do the puzzles in the newspaper, I can say that I have always liked trying to make sense out of a mystery. I like work that is fast-paced and stimulating, and my time on the medicine wards certainly met those criteria.

The first patient that I admitted during my Medicine clerkship was a man who came in with chest pain. At first it was difficult to take a history from him because he was in pain and understandably not in the mood to converse. Eventually, he was comfortable enough to speak with me candidly. After taking care of him for two weeks, I learned much about him and from him. He spoke to me about growing up in an army base in Panama and his 30 years of service. He was the first patient that truly treated me like his doctor, and it was an honor and a privilege to be seen in this light. This is another aspect of medicine that I love, the ability to interact with my patients, knowing they will eventually depend on me to care for them. As such, I always try to spend time talking to my patients about their background in the hopes I can always maintain the proper perspective: that I am treating people and not diseases.

I believe I will be an asset to the Internal Medicine community. I am hard-working, dedicated, and always striving to improve my skills. I am a good listener, work well in a team, and I have learned to be a critical thinker. I genuinely care about my patients, I am empathetic to their needs and I will certainly advocate for them. Working in medicine requires physicians to continually evolve, be adaptable and utilize new information. I love to learn, whether it be in a lecture, from an article, in a one-to-one teaching session or through a critique of my performance. I also look forward to the day, when as a resident, I will be able to teach others. Teaching is something that I have always enjoyed. During my Post-baccalaureate year I was a

General Chemistry teaching assistant. At SUNY Downstate I tutored first and second year medical students, and I look forward to having teaching opportunities in the future. I am also eager to gain more experience in clinical research during my residency.

After residency I plan to do a fellowship. As of now, I am most interested in gastroenterology, but I want to be open-minded, as I know that Internal Medicine has opportunities in many exciting subspecialties. Eventually I hope to be involved in academic medicine so that I will be able work with medical students and residents. Most importantly, I want every day to be spent working with patients. It is the human aspect that drove me to choose Internal Medicine, and I hope that my career allows me to have a positive impact on the lives of the people that I treat.