

PERSONAL STATEMENT

“Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs even though checkered by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much because they live in the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat.” These words of Theodore Roosevelt most closely capture the anticipation with which I look toward residency training in pediatrics. I fully expect to be challenged and stretched to the ends of my intellectual, and sometimes physical, capabilities while in this last phase of formal training; yet, it is with great joy that I risk being “checkered by failure” so that the eyes of a young child can rest trustfully in mine.

Few things excite me more than being with children. Therefore, I have surprised no one by choosing a career in pediatrics. However, when asked about the lines of logic that I used to come to this decision or the life experiences that drew me to pediatrics, I sometimes stutter. It is not due to a lack of introspection; rather, it is almost as if they have asked me why I placed the round peg into the round hole. Without question, I can point to my mother’s battle with lupus, my father’s fight with cancer, multiple summer camps with junior high children, working with church youth groups, and numerous other milestones which affirm my desire to be a pediatrician. But at the heart of it all is simply the realization that pediatrics is the only career that possesses the goodness of fit that we all desire. Knowing this, it is quite reasonable for me to say that I have always wanted to be a doctor (though aspirations to be a professional tennis player have surfaced from time to time), and that pediatrics would be the perfect way for that dream to be realized.

It would be inaccurate, however, to assume that a well-rooted desire would be sufficient to enter such a demanding specialty. I believe that the pediatrician must possess a character beyond reproach, a heart that overflows with compassion and warmth, and the desire to serve, even when receipt of gratitude is not guaranteed. These, in addition to high competency and a love for children and parents, are the marks of a doctor in whom children can place their trust. As one who believes strongly in these character traits, I am committed to their cultivation in my life. I will not dare say that I have attained them in their completion, but I do believe that I possess the building blocks on which these qualities are built, namely honesty, integrity, a desire to lead by serving, and love.

In light of these things, I am searching for a program which is committed to the excellence that belongs to pediatrics. Specifically, I am looking for one which is resident and family friendly, since my newly wedded wife is of great importance to me. Further, I am interested in a moderate to large sized residency class, since a great synergy is found when multiple minds work in concert. In some ways, I have yet to determine the format which my career will take. Though I have committed to at least four years of community-based pediatrics following residency, I am still open to the possibilities of subspecialization, academic medicine, and medical missions. Therefore I am interested in a program that will balance specific training within the subspecialties of pediatrics with continuity clinics which will develop my skills as a general pediatrician. These are the qualities of an attractive program, in which the physician, as well as the person, may grow and mature.

Roosevelt was correct. The life we have chosen as physicians is often checkered by failure; however the triumphs are so glorious, the eyes of a child so bright, that whatever the temporary cost, for the sake of those in our care, it is worth every sacrifice. And when asked why we have chosen this road, we have simply to respond that we are round pegs, and round pegs belong in round holes.