2020-2021 Golden Stethoscope Nomination

Nominated for: Best Role Model

Name of Nominee Dr. Mike Brunnquell

When people ask me what medical specialty I am interested in, the conversation usually starts with a few of my top considerations, followed by, "And hospital medicine…but I can't tell yet if that's because I like the field itself or if it is because my judgment is clouded by how much I like my preceptor."

Since Mike will never admit it himself, I am more than happy to write praise on his behalf! Mike is an outstanding physician, teacher, and person — the synergistic combination of technical expertise and instant personability.

During one of my early sessions, I was to interview a patient with renal symptoms. I had just finished my "Molecules to Medicine" block, meaning that apart from genetic diseases, I knew nothing about medicine, let alone renal pathology. Rather than throwing me in the deep end, Mike set me up for success. He diagrammed for me three categories of renal failure: pre-renal azotemia, intrinsic renal failure, and post-renal azotemia. Given that knowledge, I was tasked with gathering a patient history and seeing if I could figure out what was going on. Did I think not enough blood was getting to the kidney? Did I think the kidney itself was somehow damaged? Or did I think that something was blocking outflow from the kidney? Mike gave me all the tools I needed while still providing a challenge — a difficult balance to strike as a teacher.

He takes time out of his busy schedule to dedicate to teaching. Multiple sessions were dedicated to cardiac physiology. One session was even dedicated to oral presentations — valuable preparation for clinical rotations. In addition to providing feedback, he even modeled for me how he would prepare and deliver a presentation from start to finish. This was something I'd never been explicitly taught in my medical training!

Beyond the technical foundation Mike provided, the most admirable aspect is his interpersonal interactions — with patients, other physicians, and staff members. He enters the room, sees what the patient is watching on TV, and instantly connects with the patient. During more serious cases, he sits down with the patient and finds the words the patient needs to hear in that moment. Sometimes the best learnings are not the concrete lessons explicitly taught, but the behaviors picked up implicitly from modeling after others. Mike has provided both of these.

Proficient, structured, empathetic, and personable. These qualities make Mike an exceptional role model for budding physicians. He also makes preceptor a fun time!

Written by: Richie Tran, Class of 2023 (Phase II)