

As he attempted to angle his camera correctly in the woods of Alabama, a middle-aged photographer adjusted his foot near the edge of the cliff he was standing on and fell what was estimated to be about fifteen feet. Upon impact, the photographer broke both of his legs but had no means of communicating with anyone. His family, who had become desperately worried, called law enforcement who deployed a search and rescue helicopter. Nearly twenty-four hours passed before he was finally located. As he was rushed into the emergency room, I watched the team of physicians and nurses rapidly surround him, hooking up IVs, assessing his damages, and trying to offer comforting words. As their medical scribe, I stood there rapidly typing on my computer attempting to collect the details of this seemingly unbelievable story; however, all I could feel was pain for his family and a burning desire to do more for them. Once the patient had stabilized, two young girls and a middle-aged woman ran down the hall and straight into the patient's room. Reunited as a family, they began to sob the instance they laid eyes upon the man. In that moment, I knew I found my life's passion and destiny. The feeling of being a part of the healing process was priceless even just as an observer.

Though my family's native country of Malawi is nicknamed, "the warm heart of Africa", it also unfortunately serves as a reminder of what a privilege it is to have great healthcare. As a child, I have vivid memories of the panic and fear that would fill my father's eyes when the phone rang with an international number. When illness struck at home, the outcome was often unfavorable. His sister, who was expecting twins, died during childbirth as a result of poorly equipped health facilities and the tragedy left an imprint in each of our memories. My compassion for people who are suffering stems from observing, first-hand, the ripple effects of coming from a third-world country. My heart aches for the numerous family members who had untimely deaths due to inaccessible and insufficient health care and my experiences inspire me to pursue medicine. I want to be a part of the solution.

My steps toward becoming a part of the solution began when I participated in a health disparities focused research program at [REDACTED] University as a high school sophomore. My experience provided insight into the unfortunate situations that plagued my family in Malawi and communities globally; the issues are multifaceted. I became enthralled with wanting to understand how medicine could reach people who have been failed by their health care system or lack a system in general. I continued similar research the summer after my junior year of high school and again the summer after my freshman year of college. Each summer experience deepened my passion for addressing the discrepancy in adequate health care for individuals globally and in my community. However, I recognized that there was still something missing in my experience. Research strengthened my analytical skills but it didn't provide the same emotional satisfaction that I received from interacting with people directly.

Upon arriving at this conclusion, I applied to be a medical scribe. From my first day on the job I was thrown into the whirlwind that is the emergency room. The quiet, focused environment that I had experienced in my research lab was exchanged for the rush of urgency. As I rushed to keep up with the physicians I was assigned to, I watched in awe as they navigated from room to room adapting to each patient's unique needs. The best example of this was Dr. [REDACTED] who masterfully read each of her patients. From the moment we stepped into the room she adjusted

the tone of her voice, her sense of humor and even her dialect; she was completely in tune with her patients. She taught me that the work of healing began from the moment she stepped in the room rather than after she had written the prescription. Observing Dr. [REDACTED] also taught me that service as a physician begins with the willingness to meet people where they are emotionally and culturally. Scribing pushed me to be resilient as the learning curve was steep and there were times when I made mistakes and felt humiliated. Due to the pace of the emergency department, there was rarely ever time to dwell on mistakes and I learned to take my missteps in stride. I allowed each experience to shape me into a better scribe for the next encounter. While there were disheartening moments and tragedies, every moment of effort that went into treating each patient was worthwhile and confirmed that I had found my passion in medicine.

I aspire to be a physician because I find my identity in serving those who are in need. I value service in remembrance of my lost family members in Malawi who inspired my passion for medicine. I am fueled by my compassion for the underserved to embrace the long hours and tough choices that lay ahead in a medical career. While I have seen the impact of skilled healers on patients, I have also witnessed the lasting imprint that patients leave on the physicians, nurses and even scribes with whom they interact. I plan to use the skills I gain to bring the fight one step closer to bridging the gap between healthcare and those in need.