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## Tribute to Dr. Christine Matthews Dalton

Medicine has been described as a calling or a sacrifice. The impetus for this particular definition has been denoted by the amount of time, dedication, and energy physicians spend on their patients. Unfortunately, this devotion may be at the expense of our own health. For Dr. Christine Matthews Dalton, this dedication precisely epitomizes her life, for which I am indebted to her sustained commitment to educating medical students.

I distinctly remember meeting Dr. Christine Matthews Dalton (at the time Dr. Matthews) during my first Clinical Skills class. With a vibrant scarf around her head, Dr. Matthews avidly listened and took notes during our small group sessions. As someone interested in oncology, I immediately cued into to her young age and could hardly believe she had cancer. In the coming days, I had come to learn that Dr. Matthews was in the inaugural graduating class of the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine at Florida International University. Because of her battle with cancer, Dr. Matthews decided to delay her residency in family medicine and joined the clinical skills faculty at FIU.

Throughout the year, Dr. Matthews quickly acclimated to her role and became more involved with each student, including myself. As someone still gaining confidence with my patient interactions, I despised the pressure of mock patient examina-

tions, and my nerves were clearly detectable through my vocal shakiness. During my first objective structured clinical examination, I forgot several critical historical elements and was too disorganized in my questioning. Dr. Matthews rated my performance, but included valuable tips on flow and sincerely empathized with my nervousness. Her criticisms were critical and constructive, but uplifting and encouraging at the same time. I admired her ability to instill confidence in medical students through not only her enthusiasm for teaching, but also her incessant smile. No one would have seen her physical pain behind her upbeat attitude.

On November 13, 2014, I was saddened to learn that Dr. Matthews had passed away. Even through her final days, Dr. Matthews worked to improve the clinical skills curriculum, finished writing a grant, and prepared to present at a conference. Her perseverance despite her illness will never cease to amaze me. The late Stuart Scott, ESPN anchor for SportsCenter, most eloquently stated during his ESPY Award speech, "When you die, it does not mean that you lose to cancer. You beat cancer by how you live, why you live, and in the manner in which you live." Dr. Matthews dedicated her life to medicine by educating medical students, even timid ones, like myself. Tragically, Dr. Matthews never had the opportunity to start her residency in family medicine or become a small community based

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physician, but I hope to improve upon her legacy through teaching and academic medicine.

Utilizing the knowledge Dr. Matthews bestowed upon me, I am currently a Clinical Skills Peer Trainer for a mentoring program designed to assist first year medical students with history taking and physical examination techniques. Additionally, as co-president of the American Medical Women's Association, I have started a Special Olympics community-based practicum to teach medical students how to assist patients with physical and learning disabilities. I know I can only carry a fraction of Dr. Christine Matthews Dalton's compassion and commitment, for which I hope to be able to instill in the next generation of female physicians. There is no justice these words can do to summarize Dr. Matthews' brief, albeit impactful life and possible life as a family medicine physician, but I wish to honor her for everything she's done for me and those she touched. Thank you, Dr. Matthews. May you rest in peace.